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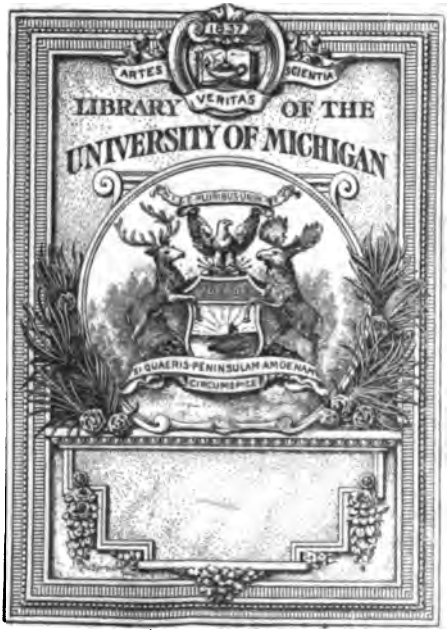

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Rev. Elisha Tucker

Presented by his affectionate Fr

Ebenr. Caldwell

Feb 1848

THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

LATE REVEREND THOMAS BOSTON
OF ETTRICK;

NOW FIRST COLLECTED, AND REPRINTED WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT;

INCLUDING

HIS MEMOIRS, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

EDITED BY THE

REV. SAMUEL M'MILLAN.

VOL. I.

ABERDEEN:
GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
M.DCCC.XLVIII.

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AN

ILLUSTRATION

OF THE

DOCTRINES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

WITH RESPECT TO

FAITH AND PRACTICE,

UPON THE PLAN OF THE ASSEMBLY'S
SHORTER CATECHISM;

COMPREHENDING

A COMPLETE BODY OF DIVINITY.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS BOSTON,
OF ETTRICK.

WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

Hold fast the form of sound words.—2 Tim. i. 13.

ABERDEEN:
GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
1848.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

PAGE.

OF MAN'S CHIEF END AND HAPPINESS.

1 COR. x. 31.—Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

PSAL. LXXIII. 25, 26.—Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever, ... 9

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

2 TIM. III. 16.—All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 19

THE UTILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES AS A RULE, ... 37

THE SCOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

2 TIM. I. 13.—Hold fast the form of sound words—in faith and love, ... 42

THE SCRIPTURES THE BOOK OF THE LORD, AND THE DILIGENT STUDY AND SEARCH THEREOF RECOMMENDED.

ISAIAH XXXIV. 16.—Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them, ... 56

OF GOD AND HIS PERFECTIONS.

JOHN IV. 24.—God is a Spirit, ... 77

OF THE UNITY OF GOD.

DEUT. VI. 4.—Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.

1 COR. VIII. 4.—We know that there is none other God but one.

COMPARE JER. X. 10.—But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, 131

OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

1 JOHN V. 7.—For there are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one, ... 142

144052

PAGE.

OF THE DECREES OF GOD.

EPHES. I. 11.—According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, ... 149

OF THE WORK OF CREATION.

HEB. XI. 3.—Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear, ... 167

OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

GEN. I. 27.—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them, ... 177

OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

MATTH. X. 29.—Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father, ... 186

THE WISE OBSERVATION OF PROVIDENCES, ILLUSTRATED AND ENFORCED.

PSAL. CVII. 43.—Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord, ... 193

OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

GEN. II. 16, 17.—And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die, ... 229

OF THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.

GEN. III. 6, 7.—And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons, ... 242

OF SIN IN GENERAL.

1 JOHN III. 4.—Sin is the transgression of the law, ... 256

OF THE FIRST SIN IN PARTICULAR.

GEN. III. 6, 7.—And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons, ... 267

OF OUR FALL IN ADAM.

ROM. V. 19.—For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous, ... 273

PAGE.

OF THE SINFULNESS OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

PSAL. LI. 5.—Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me, ... 276

OF THE MISERIES OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

ROM. V. 12.—By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, ... 293

OF ELECTION TO EVERLASTING LIFE.

EPH. I. 3, 4, 5.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ... 301

OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

PSAL. LXXXIX. 3.—I have made a covenant with my chosen.
1 COR. XV. 45.—The last Adam was made a quickening spirit, ... 314

OF CHRIST THE ONLY REDEEMER OF GOD'S ELECT.

GAL. IV. 4, 5.—When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, ... 375

OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION.

LUKE I. 35.—The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, ... 389

OF CHRIST'S OFFICES IN GENERAL.

ZECH. VI. 13.—Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a Priest upon his throne, ... 403

OF CHRIST'S PROPHETICAL OFFICE.

ACTS III. 22.—A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you, ... 411

OF CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

HEB. VII. 17.—Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec, 437

OF CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

PSAL. II. 6.—Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion, ... 475

OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

PHIL. II. 8.—He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, ... 490

PAGE.

OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION.

PHIL. II. 9—11.—Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, ... 504

OF THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION.

TITUS III. 5.—He saved us,—by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, ... 529

OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

1 COR. XII. 13.—For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, ... 544

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

2 TIM. I. 9.—Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, ... 557

OF THE BENEFITS OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

ROM. VIII. 30.—Whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified, ... 576

OF JUSTIFICATION.

ROM. III. 24.—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ... 581

OF ADOPTION.

2 COR. VI. 18.—And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, ... 612

THE DIVINE CALL TO LEAVE THE DEVIL'S FAMILY EXPLAINED AND URGED.

2 COR. VI. 17, 18.—Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, ... 643

OF SANCTIFICATION.

1 COR. VI. 11.—But ye are sanctified—by the Spirit of our God, ... 653

AN ILLUSTRATION

OF

THE DOCTRINES

OF

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

OF MAN'S CHIEF END AND HAPPINESS.

1 Cor. x. 31.—*Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.—*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

Knowledge is a necessary foundation of faith and holiness; and where ignorance reigns in the mind, there is confusion in the heart and life. We have the word of truth in our hands, and many methodical systems of divine truths, amongst which the Shorter Catechism, composed by the Reverend Assembly of Divines at Westminster, in pursuance of the solemn league and covenant, as a part of the then intended uniformity between the three nations, is deservedly reckoned the chief. This I shall endeavour to explain with all possible brevity and perspecuity, that ye may have a view of those divine truths, with the reasons of them. And this I have thought it the more necessary to do, in order that your minds may be established in the truth, as our time is like to be a time of trial, wherein ye may be exposed to many snares, and so be in danger of apostasy.

In the first of the texts which I have read, ye have,

1. The chief end of human actions, the glory of God: that is the scope of which all we think, or speak, or do, should tend; this is the point or common centre, in which all should meet.

2. The extent of it. It is not only some of our actions, but all of them, of what kind soever, that must be directed to this end. This, then, is man's chief duty.

In the second text we have,

1. The Psalmist's chief desire, and what he points at as his only true happiness; that is, the enjoyment of God. He takes God for and instead of all, that in him alone his soul may rest.

2. The reason of this is taken from, (1.) The creature's emptiness, both in body and spirit, ver. 25. (2.) From God's fulness and sufficiency: and this is amplified by the eternity of it, *my portion for ever.*

From both texts the following doctrine natively follows. Doct. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever."

In handling this doctrine, I shall speak, I. to the glorifying of God, which is one part of man's chief end.

II. To the enjoyment of God for ever, wherein man's chief happiness consists, and which he is to seek as his chief good.

I. I shall speak to the glorifying of God, which is one part of man's chief end. And here I shall shew,

1. The nature of glorifying God.

2. In what respects God's glory is man's chief end.

3. The extent of this glorifying God.

4. The reason of it.

First, I shall shew the nature of glorifying God. To glorify, is either to make glorious, or to declare to be glorious. God glorifies, *i. e.* makes angels or men glorious; but man cannot make God glorious, for he is not capable of any additional glory, being in himself infinitely glorious, Job xxxv. 7. Hence it is plain, that God gets no advantage to himself by the best works of men, the profit of our holiness redounding entirely to ourselves, Acts xvii. 25. Psal. xvi. 2.

God is glorified, then, only declaratively; he is glorified when his glory is declared. This is done two ways. Objectively, by the creatures inanimate and irrational. Thus the heavens declare the glory of God, Psal. xix. 1. This the creatures do, while they afford matter of praise to God, as a violin is fit to make music, though there must be a hand to play on it ere it can sound. Man declares his glory also actively. And this he ought to do,

1. By his heart, 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Glorify God in your spirit.* Honouring God with the lips, not with the heart, is but a very lame and unacceptable performance. He ought to be glorified by our understanding, taking him up in the glory which the scripture reveals him in, thinking highly of him, and esteeming him above all other

persons or things, Psal. lxxiii. 25. So they that know him not, can never glorify him: and they that esteem any person or thing more than, or as much as him, dishonour him. We glorify him by our wills, chusing him as our portion and chief good, as he really is in himself; by our affections loving him, and rejoicing and delighting in him above every other.

2. By his lips, Psal. l. 23. 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.' Therefore man's tongue is called his glory, Psal. xvi. 9. not only because it serves him for speech, which exalts him above the brutes, but because it is given him as a proper instrument for speaking forth the glory of God. So that it must needs be a strange perverting of the tongue, to set it against the heavens, and let it loose to the dishonour of God, and fetter it as to his glory.

3. By his life, Mat. v. 16. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' A holy life is a life of light; it is a shining light, to let a blind world see the glory of God. Sin darkens the glory of God, draws a veil over it. David's sin made the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. The study of holiness says, God is holy; mourning for every slip says, God is spotless; walking holily in all manner of conversation, within and without, &c. says, God is omniscient and omnipresent, &c. As when men find a well-ordered family, that tells what a man the master of it is.

Secondly, I proceed to show in what respects God's glory is man's chief end.

First, It is man's end,

1. It is the end which God aimed at when he made man, Prov. xvi. 4. 'The Lord hath made all things for himself,' Rom. xi. 36. 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' Every rational agent proposes to himself an end in working, and the most perfect the highest end. Now God is the most perfect Being, and his glory the noblest end. God is not actively glorified by all men, and therefore he surely did not design it; but he designed to have glory from them, either by them or on them; and so it will be. Happy they who glorify him by their actings, that they may not glorify him by their eternal sufferings.

2. It is the end of man as God's work. Man was made fit for glorifying God, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God made man upright;' as a well-tuned instrument, or as a house conveniently built, though never inhabited. The very fabric of a man's body, whereby he looks upward, while the beasts look down, is a palpable evidence of this.

3. It is that which man should aim at, the mark to which he should direct all he does, 1 Cor. x. 31, the text. This is what we

should continually have in our eye, the grand design we should be carrying on in the world, Psal. xvi. 8. 'I have set the Lord always before me,' says David.

Secondly, It is man's chief end, that which God chiefly aimed at, the chief end of man as God's work, and that which man should chiefly aim at. God made man for other ends, as to govern, use, and dispose of other creatures in the earth, sea, and air, wisely, soberly, and mercifully, Gen. i. 26. Man was fitted for these ends, and a man may propose them lawfully to himself, seeing God has set them before him; but still these are but subordinate ends to his glory.

There are some ends which men propose to themselves, which are simply unlawful, as to satisfy their revenge, their lust, their covetousness, &c. These are not capable of subordination to the glory of God, who hates robbery for burnt-offering. But there are other ends, which are indeed in themselves lawful, yet become sinful, if they be not set in their due place, that is, subordinate to the glory of God. Now, God's glory is made our chief end, when these three things concur.

1. When whatever end we have in our actions, the glory of God is still one of our ends in acting. We may eat and drink for the nourishment of our bodies; but this must not justle out our respect to the glory of God. If the nourishment of our bodies be the only end of our eating and drinking, it is sinful, and out of the due order.

2. It must not only be our end, but it must be our main and principal end, that which we chiefly design. When God's glory is our chief end, all other ends that we propose to ourselves will be downweighed by this; all other sheaves must bow to that sheaf: as a diligent servant designs to please both the master and his steward, but chiefly the master. But when, on the contrary, a man eats and drinks (for instance) more for the nourishment of his body than for God's glory, it is plain, that God's glory is not the chief end of the man in that action. Hence we read, 2 Tim. iii. 4. of some that are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.'

3. When it is the ultimate end, the last end, the top and perfection of what we design, beyond which we have no more view, and to which all other ends are made subservient, and as means to that end. Thus we should eat that our bodies may be refreshed; we should desire that our bodies may be refreshed, that we may be the more capable to serve and glorify God in our stations. Thus we are obliged to seek our own salvation, that God may be glorified; and not to seek God's glory only that we may be saved; for that is to make the glory of God a stepping-stone to our own safety.

Thirdly, I come now to show the extent of this duty. Respect to the glory of God is as salt that must be served up with every dish. The great work of our life is to glorify him; it is the end of our first and of our second creation, Isa. xliii. 21. 'This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.' We must be for God, Hos. iii. 3. and live to him. This must be the end.

1. Of our natural actions, 1 Cor. x. 31. eating, sleeping, walking, &c. we are under a law as to these things. We may not eat and drink as we please, more than pray as we please, Zech. vii. 6. All these things must be done in subserviency to the glory of God. These things must be done that we may live, and living may glorify God; and when we can do it without them in heaven, then none of these things shall be done.

2. Of our civil actions, working our work, buying and selling, &c. Eph. vi. 7. Prov. xxi. 4. It was one of the sins of the old world, that they were eating; the word is properly used of beasts eating their food: they had no higher end in it than beasts; and marrying, a thing in itself lawful, but they had no eye to God in it.

3. Of our moral and religious actions, Zech. vii. 5. We must pray, hear, &c. for God's glory.

This is such a necessary ingredient in our actions, that none of them are truly good and acceptable to God without it, Zech. vii. 5. Do what we will, it cannot be service to God, if we do not make him our end; no more than a servant's working to himself is service to his master. God will never be the rewarder of a work, whereof he is not the end; for if a man should build houses to all the country, if he build not one to me, I owe him nothing. Alas! to what purpose serves a generation of good works all killed by a depraved end?

Though it is a duty frequently to have a formal and express intention of the glory of God in our actings, yet to have it in every action is impossible: neither are we bound to it; for then, for that very intention we should be obliged to have another, another for that, and another for that, *in infinitum*. But we should always habitually and interpretatively design the glory of God. And that is done when, (1.) The course of our lives is directed to the glory of God, Psal. l. ult. (2.) When we walk according to the rule of God's word, taking heed that we swerve not in any thing from it. And, (3.) When God's will is the reason as well as the rule of our actions; when we believe a truth, because God has said it; and do a duty, because God has commanded it. If we do not so, God loses his glory, and we lose our labour.

Fourthly, The reason of the point is, because he is the first prin-

ciple, therefore he must be the last end. He is the first and the last, the Alpha, and therefore the Omega. God is the fountain of our being; and therefore seeing we *are* of him, we should be *to* him, Rom. xi. ult. forecited. Man is a mere relative being; God is our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. Our being is but a borrowed being from him, as the rays or beams of the sun are borrowed from the sun: therefore I AM is God's name. Whatever perfection we have is from him; hence he is called 'the only wise, none good but one, that is God:' he gives us the continuance of all these things, and it is on his cost that we live. As when the waters come from the sea unto the earth, and go back again unto it by brooks and rivers; so all we receive and enjoy comes from God, and ought to go back again to him, by being used for his glory. Wherefore to make ourselves our chief end, is to make ourselves a god to ourselves; for a creature to be a centre to itself, and that God should be a means to that end, is to blaspheme, John viii. 50.

II. I shall speak to the enjoyment of God for ever, wherein man's chief happiness consists, and which he is to seek as his chief good. Here I shall show,

1. The nature of this enjoyment.

2. The order of it.

3. That it is man's chief end in point of happiness.

First, I shall shew the nature of this enjoyment. There is a twofold enjoyment of God, imperfect and perfect.

First, There is an imperfect enjoyment of God in this life; which consists in two things.

1. In union with him, or a special saving interest in him, whereby God is their God by covenant. By this union Christ and believers are so joined, that they are one spirit, one mystical body. The whole man, soul and body, is united to him, and, through the Mediator, unto God. This is the foundation of all saving enjoyment of God.

2. In communion with God, which is a participation of the benefits of that saving relation, whereof the soul makes returns to the Lord in the exercise of its graces, particularly of faith and love. This is had in the duties of religion, prayer, meditation, &c. in which the Lord privileges his people with manifestations of his grace, favour, and love, bestows on them the influences of his Spirit, gives them many tokens of his kindness, and fills them with joy and peace in believing.

Secondly, There is a perfect enjoyment of God in heaven, when this world is no more. This consists in,

1. An intimate presence with him in glory Psal. xvi. 11, 'In his

presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' God himself shall be with them, and they shall ever be with the Lord, enjoying his glorious presence, brought near to his throne, and standing before him, where he shews his inconceivable glory.

2. In seeing him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. They shall have a full, a satisfying, and never-ending sight of God, and of all his glorious perfections and excellencies, and they shall be ravished with the view thereof for ever.

3. In a perfect union with him, Rev. xxi. 3. He will be their God. They were united to God in Christ here by the Spirit and faith, and made partakers of a divine nature, but then only in part; but in heaven they shall perfectly partake of it. There shall be a most close and intimate union between God and them: God shall be in them, and they in God, in the way of a glorious and most perfect union, never to be dissolved.

4. In an immediate, full, free, and comfortable communion with him, infinitely superior to all the communion they ever had with him in this world, and which no mortal can suitably describe.

5. *Lastly*, In full joy and satisfaction resulting from these things for ever, Mat. xxv. 21. The presence and enjoyment of God and the Lamb, shall satisfy them with pleasures for evermore. They shall swim for ever in an ocean of joy, and every object they see shall fill them with the most ecstatic joy, which shall be ever fresh and new to them, through all the ages of eternity.*

Secondly, Let us consider the order of this enjoyment.

1. It is a part of man's chief end, and, in conjunction with glorifying of God, makes it up. And these two are put together, because no man can glorify God, but he that takes God for his chief good and supreme happiness.

2. Glorifying of God is put before the enjoying of him, because the way of duty is the way to the enjoyment of God. Holiness on earth must necessarily go before felicity in heaven, Heb. xii. 14. There is an inseparable connexion betwixt the two, as between the end and the means; so that no person who does not glorify God here, shall ever enjoy him hereafter. The connexion is instituted by God himself, so that the one can never be attained without the other. Let no person, then, who has no regard for the glory and honour of God in this world, dream that he shall be crowned with glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, in the heavenly man-

* The reader may see a more full account of the happiness of the saints in heaven, in the author's book, Fourfold State, state 4, head 5, Vol.

sions. No; the pure in heart, and they who glorify God now, shall alone see God, to their infinite joy in heaven.

THIRDLY, I shall shew, that the enjoyment of God is man's chief end in point of happiness, the thing that he should chiefly seek. For this end,

1. Consider what man is. He is, (1.) A creature that desires happiness, and cannot but desire it. The desire of happiness is woven into his nature, and cannot be eradicated. It is as natural for him to desire it as it is to breathe. (2.) He is not self-sufficient: he is conscious to himself that he wants many things, and therefore he is ever seeking something without himself in order to be happy. (3.) Nothing but an infinite good can fully satisfy the desires of an immortal soul: because, whatever good he finds in the creature, he can still desire more, and will continue to desire it; and where it is not to be found, there his happiness is marred. So that man's happiness is neither to be found in himself nor in any creature, or created good.

2. Consider what God is.

1*st*, God is the chief good. Some persons, as angels, &c. and some things, as grace, glory, &c. are good; but God is the chief good, for he is the fountain good, and the water that is good is always best in the fountain. All other goodness is but second-hand goodness, derived and dependant; but God is original, underived, and independent goodness, the cause and source of whatever is good in heaven and earth. Now, where the more goodness is, there the more it is to be sought. And therefore, seeing God is the chief good, the enjoyment of him is the chief end which man should aim at in seeking.

2*dly*, God is all good. (1.) There is nothing in him but what is good; he is entirely without imperfection. (2.) All that is good is in him; so that the soul, finding him commensurate to its desires, needs nothing besides him; and therefore should not, and cannot, fully rest in any person or thing but God, who alone is able to satisfy all its desires, and afford it that happiness which it earnestly pants after.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. O how does reigning sin pervert the spirit of man, turning it quite away from its chief end! How many are there who make themselves their chief end! They are conjured within the circle of self, and out of it they cannot move. Like beasts they grovel on the ground, seeking themselves, and acting for themselves only or chiefly, pursuing the enjoyment of earthly things; but look not to God, Phil. iii. 19. Their own advantage is the chief motive and

aim they have in their natural, civil, and religious actions, either their own pleasure, profit, or honour and glory. And they never think of, never propose the glory and honour of the infinite Majesty of heaven in any thing they do.

2. This may fill the best with shame and blushing. O how much is God dishonoured by our hearts, lips, and lives! O what self-seeking mixes itself with our best actions! How eagerly do we pursue created things, and how faintly the enjoyment of God! How absurd is such conduct! and how dishonourable to a holy God! It is a saying upon the matter, that God is not the chief good, that he is not a suitable portion for the soul, and that the creature is better than God. How should we be ashamed of ourselves on this account, and labour earnestly to make God the chief and ultimate end of all our actions, and the enjoyment of him our chief happiness!

3. Behold the excellency of man above other creatures on earth! He is made for a noble end, to glorify and enjoy God, while other creatures were made for him. How sad is it, that men should thus forget their dignity, and turn slaves to those creatures which were made to serve them! And how deplorable and lamentable is it, that men, in place of making God their ultimate end, and placing their chief happiness in him, should make their belly, their lusts and idols, their God, and place their chief felicity in the gratification of sensual and brutish pleasures; as the drunkard does in his bottle, the unclean person in his whore, the miser in his wealth, and the ambitious man in titles of honour. Alas! our hearts by nature are set on the earth that we tread upon, and our desires reach up to those things that we should make stepping-stones of. Let us earnestly implore divine grace to cure this disorder of our hearts, and give them a bias to more excellent things, and the enjoyment of that which will survive the grave, and not perish with the wrecks of time, and the dissolution of the world.

4. The soul of man is immortal, seeing to enjoy God for ever is its ultimate and supreme happiness. God is immortal, and so must the soul be too, which can never be satisfied but in this never-dying being. The body too must rise again, seeing God is the God and portion of the whole man. Now, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Can that thinking and immaterial substance which eagerly desires happiness, and can find it no where but in the immortal God, perish with the body, and all its thoughts and desires be extinguished in the grave? No; its chief happiness will subsist for ever, and so will the soul too. And both soul and body, which were united to God here, shall continue to be united to him for ever, after the resurrection. Let us then seek to be united to God here, that we may be happy with and in him for ever.

5. When God and the creature come in competition, we must renounce the creature, and cleave to God only, Luke xiv. 33. God is the chief good, and to glorify and adhere to him at all times, and in all cases, and amidst all trials, is our great duty, a duty absolutely required of us. If we are reduced to that dilemma, that we must either give up with the creature, or any worldly goods or possessions, or even life itself, or give up with and deny God and his cause, we must give up with and abandon the former, and not prefer them to the glory of God, which we ought always to study as our main end, and account our chief happiness and joy.

6. Here is a rule to try doctrines by, and also practices. Whatever doctrine tends to glorify God, and promote his honour in the world, is certainly from God, and is to be embraced. And whatever practices have that same tendency, they are good, and deserve to be imitated. Whereas any doctrine that tends to dishonour God, to rob him of his glory, and set the crown upon the creature's head, to depreciate the free grace of God, exalt the power of nature and of free-will, in opposition to the efficacious and irresistible grace of God, as the doctrines of the Pelagians, Papists, Arminians, and others do, is not from God. Neither is any doctrine or opinion that robs the Son of God of his essential dignity, supremacy, independency, and equality with the Father, to be received, because it is not of God, who will have all men to honour the Son even as they honour the Father.

Lastly, Let this then be your main and chief work, to glorify God, and to seek to enjoy him. And hence see the absolute need of Christ, and faith in him; for there is no glorifying of the Father without the Son, 1 John ii. 23. and no enjoying of God, but through him. No sacrifice is or can be accepted, unless offered upon this altar; and there is no coming into the chamber of presence, but as introduced by Christ.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

2 TIM. iii. 16.—*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

THE next head which falls to be touched is the holy scripture, the rule which God has given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. We are poor blind creatures, that know not our way, neither how we should glorify God, nor how we may come to the enjoyment of him. Therefore God hath given us the revelation of his mind in that great point. The connexion betwixt this and the preceding question is abundantly obvious; the one points out the end for which we were made, the other the rule to direct us how to attain to that end. And in this text we have two things.

1. The divine authority of the scriptures asserted. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God.* The word *scripture* signifies *writing* in general; but here it is appropriated to the holy scripture. It principally here aims at the scriptures of the Old Testament, which were written by men of a prophetic spirit: but seeing the New Testament was written by such as were endowed with the same Spirit for writing, upon that reason, what is applied to the Old belongs also to the New Testament. It is said to be of divine inspiration, because the writers were inspired by the Spirit, who guided their hearts and pens; he dictated, and they wrote; so that it is his word and not theirs; and that is extended to the whole scriptures.

2. The use and end of the scriptures: *It is profitable for doctrine,* &c. If ye desire to know the truths of religion, or what we believe, the scripture is *profitable for doctrine,* teaching us what we are to believe concerning God, Christ, and ourselves, and the great things that concern salvation. If ye want to refute the contrary errors, it is *profitable for reproof,* to convince us of the nature and importance of divine truth and point out what errors we are to avoid. If ye desire to amend your life and practice, casting off sinful practices, it is *profitable for correction,* that is, for reformation of manners. If ye want to know what is duty, and what is sin, it is necessary *for instruction and righteousness;* shewing us how to lead a holy and righteous life before God, and instructing us in the true righteousness, which is the foundation of our access to God, and acceptance with him, the righteousness of Christ. And what more is necessary for salvation, for faith and obedience, for the whole of salvation?

Two doctrines offer themselves from the words, viz.

Doct. I. 'The scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God.'

Doct. II. 'The scriptures are the rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God.'

I shall prosecute each doctrine in order.

Doct. I. 'The scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God.'

Here I shall shew,

I. What is meant by the Old and New Testament.

II. What are the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

III. The necessity of the scriptures.

IV. That the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God.

V. Deduce some inferences.

I. I shall shew what is meant by the Old and New Testament. It is the covenant of grace which is called a *testament*, and it is properly a testamentary covenant, without any proper conditions as to us, Heb. viii. 10. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Christ is the testator; he made the testament, and confirmed it with his death. The spirit of Christ drew the testament, dictating it to the holy penman. This testament of Christ's is one and the same as to substance, though sometimes more clearly revealed than at other times. The Old Testament is the more obscure draught of Christ's will, and the New Testament is the more clear one. Thus they only differ in circumstances, while the substantials of both are one and the same; one Mediator and testator, one legacy or promise of remission of sin and eternal life, and one faith as the way of obtaining it*.

II. I proceed to shew what are the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. The scriptures of the Old Testament are those which begin with Genesis, and end with Malachi; and the scriptures of the New Testament are those which begin with Matthew, and end with the Revelation. And it is worthy of our special remark, how the Old Testament and the New, like the cherubims in the most holy place, stretch forth their wings touching one another; the Old Testament ending with the prophecy of sending Christ and John the Baptist Mal. iv. and the New beginning with the history of the coming of these two.

* See more on this subject in the author's *View of the Covenant of Grace*, head 4. title, *Christ the Testator of the Covenant.*

The books of the Old Testament were divided by the Hebrews into three, the law, the Prophets, and Ketubim, written books. The law contains the five books of Moses, the Prophets are twofold, former and latter. The former are the historical books of the Old Testament, as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings; and they were so called, because they told things already done. The latter related things before they were done; and are of two sorts; the greater, which are three, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; the lesser twelve, viz. Hosea, Joel, &c. The written books were called so, because they were written by such as had the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the Hebrews speak, but not of prophecy. And of that sort are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel. The Hebrews ascribe this division of them to Ezra; and it seems our Lord Jesus Christ acknowledged the same, while he tells his disciples, Luke xxiv. 44. of the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

The books of the New Testament are divided into three sorts, Histories, the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Revelation, which is prophetic.

The books of both the Testaments were written by different authors. As to the Old Testament, Moses wrote the Pentateuch; only some verses in the end of Deuteronomy, where Moses' death is recorded, could not be written by him, but are said to have been written by Joshua; who also wrote the book that bears his name; or, according to the opinion of some, it was written by Eleazar, Aaron's son. Samuel is supposed to have written the book of Judges, and, it would appear, the last part of the book of Joshua, containing the account of the death of Joshua and Eleazar: Some think that the Judges did write every one the history of their own time; and that Samuel at last did put them all into one volume. The book of Ruth also was written by him, as the Hebrews tell. He wrote also the first book bearing his name, to the 25th chapter, where his death is narrated. The rest of the chapters of that book, and the whole of the second book, are said to have been written by David. The books of the Kings are supposed to be written by David and Solomon, and other prophets that lived in these times; so that each of them did write what was done in his own time. Job is supposed to have written the book that bears his name. David wrote the Psalms, but not all: such as are not his have the author's name prefixed; as Asaph, Heman, &c.: and they were all by Ezra collected into one volume. Ezra is said to have written the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah; Mordecai, that of Esther; and Solomon, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets,

wrote every one their own prophecies, containing a short sum of their sermons.

As for the books of the New Testament, without controversy the evangelists wrote the Gospels, according as their names are prefixed to them. Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles; and the remaining books, the Epistles and the Revelation, were written by those whose names they bear. Only, as to the Epistle to the Hebrews, there has been some doubt, some ascribing it to Luke, some to Barnabas, others to Apollos, and others to Clemens: but many learned men have given good reasons to prove it to be written by the apostle Paul.

But the principal author is the Holy Spirit, whence the scripture is called the Word of God. The penmen were but the instruments in the hand of God in writing the same. It was the Spirit that dictated them, that inspired the writers, and guided them. But the inspiration was not the same in all points to all the penmen; for some things were before utterly unknown to the writer, as the history of the creation of the world to Moses; the prediction of future events in respect of the prophets; which therefore the Spirit did immediately reveal to them: Other things were known to the writers before, as the history of Christ to the four evangelists, &c.; in respect of these there need no new revelation, but a divine irradiation of the mind of the writer, giving him a divine certainty of those things which he wrote. By this inspiration all of them were infallibly guided, so as they were put beyond all possibility of erring. And this inspiration was extended not only to the things themselves expressed, but to the words wherein they were expressed, though agreeable to the natural style and manner of each writer, 2 Pet. i. 21; Psal. xlv. 1. Upon this account the scripture is attributed to the Holy Spirit, without making any mention of the penmen, Heb. x. 15.

Quest. But what opinion are we to form of the books called *Apocrypha*, And why are they so called?

Answ. These books, which are found placed in some bibles betwixt Malachi and Matthew are called *Apocrypha*, which is a Greek word, signifying *hidden* or *absconded*. The reasons of this name are given thus (1.) Because they were not acknowleged by the church to be of divine inspiration. (2.) Because the names of the authors were hid. (3.) Because they contain some things unknown to Moses, the prophets and apostles. (4.) Because, for the foresaid reasons, they were judged unworthy to be publicly read in the church. Concerning these books, we believe that they are not of divine inspiration, and therefore no part of the canon of scripture; that is, they are not to be admitted as any part of the rule of faith and manners: and therefore they are of no authority in the church of God for the determin-

ing of controversies in religion; and so, though they may be of use as other human writings, yet they are no otherwise to be made use of nor approved. The reasons are,

1. They were not acknowledged by the church of the Jews for canonical: to whom the Apostle tells us, Rom. iii. 2. 'the oracles of God,' under the Old Testament dispensation 'were committed.' They even forbade their children to read them till they came to mature age.

2. They were not written in the Hebrew tongue, but in the Greek; and the authors of them were posterior to Malachi, who was the last of the prophets, according to the saying of the Hebrews, that the Holy Ghost went up from Israel after the death of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. And 1 Mac. iv. 46. plainly shews, that there was no prophet among them, to shew them what they should do with the stones of the polluted altar. And it may clearly appear to any unbiassed person, how the interposing of these books betwixt Malachi and Matthew does cut off the beautiful connexion betwixt the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Testament, and how Malachi's prophecy is designed of God to close up the scriptures of the Old Testament, in that he prophecies most distinctly of the coming of Christ, and John the Baptist his forerunner, with the accomplishment of which Matthew begins his gospel, as I observed before.

3. The primitive church for the first four centuries received not these books; and when they came to be read, the reader stood but in an inferior place, they being then read as profitable books, though not of divine authority.

4. They are no where cited by Christ and his apostles. Yea, they are not obscurely rejected by him, while he divides the scriptures into Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, Luke xxiv. 44. And whereas the Apostle tells us, that 'prophecy came not of old by the will of man, but *that* holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' 2 Pet. i. 21. the authors of these books pretend to no such thing. The author of Ecclesiasticus in the prologue intreats the reader to pardon them, (*viz.* him and his grandfather), wherein they may seem to come short of some words which they have laboured to interpret. Such an apology is there, 2 Mac. xv. 38. 'If I have done well, it is that which I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto.' 2 Mac. ii. 23. the author tells us, he will essay to abridge in one volume the five books of Jason of Cyrene. Ver. 26. he tells how he hath taken on him the painful labour of abridging; that it was a matter of sweat and watching to him: And ver. 27. 'But for the pleasuring of

many,' says he, 'we will undertake this great pains.' And more of this stuff has he there; which plainly speaks forth nothing else than human learning and pains, which men desire to have much accounted of amongst others.

Lastly, They neither agree with themselves nor the holy scriptures, as may plainly appear to those who will consider them diligently. 1 Mac. vi. 16. compared with ver. 4. it is said, that Antiochus died at Babylon. Yet 2 Mac. i. 13, 14, 15, 16. it is said, that when he was come into Persia, he was slain in the temple of Nanea, whom he pretended that he would marry, and would receive money in name of dowry, by her priests. Yea, 2 Mac. ix. 28. he is said to have died in a strange country in the mountains. The book of Tobit is stuffed with absurd stories; it makes the angel Raphael to tell a lie, and to teach Tobit's son a devilish art, to drive away the devil with the heart and liver of a fish; and when the evil spirit smelled the smell, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, &c. The author of the history of the Maccabees commends Rasis for self-murder, and prayer for the dead, 2 Mac. xii. 44, 45. These things plainly shew, that these books are not from the Spirit of God.

All this shews the darkness of Popery that receives these books as canonical, and the dregs remaining in the church of England, who, though they do not receive them for canonical, yet mix the reading of portions of them in their churches with the scriptures, while in the mean time, several portions of the holy scripture are passed over, and not read publicly in their service. And whilst we blame the church of England for reading in her service books that are not canonical, impartiality obliges us to say, that far too small a portion of the books that are canonical is read in the public service of our own church. This is equally culpable.

And as there is none of these to be admitted into the canon, so neither can we gratify the Papists with yielding, that there are any books of the scripture lost, lest we reflect on the providence of God, that to a miracle has preserved these books to this day, and has insured the preservation of far less parts than whole books, Mat. v. 18.

III. I proceed to shew the necessity of the scriptures.

1. There was a necessity of the revelation of the doctrine of the scriptures. For though the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable, Rom. i. 20. and ii. 14, 15. yet they are not sufficient to shew us either how we should glorify, or how we may enjoy God, and so are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, that is necessary to salva-

tion. For (1.) There is no salvation out of Christ, Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 11. there is no salvation through him but by faith, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16. and xvii. 3. and there can be no faith nor knowledge of Christ but by revelation, Rom. x. 14,—17. (2.) They who have only nature's light, and so do not enjoy divine revelation, are without God, and have no hope, Eph. ii. 12.; and therefore there was a necessity for preaching the gospel, 1 Cor. i. 21. (3.) Whatever knowledge men may attain to of God by nature, yet saving illumination and conversion can only be got by the revealed will of God written in his word. See Psal. xix. throughout.

2. There is a necessity of the scriptures, or written word, though the Papists whose kingdom is supported by darkness, deny it. It is true, God did teach his church a long time before Moses without the written word; but then the same doctrine that we have in the scriptures, the patriarchs had by extraordinary revelation often repeated; and their long lives gave them opportunity to keep what was so revealed uncorrupted, and so to hand it down to others. But now both these are gone, and therefore the written word is necessary, (1.) For preserving the doctrine from corruption in such times of apostasy, 2 Pet. iii. 1. (2.) For the better propagating of the truth, Matt. xxviii. 19. The apostles could not with their voice teach all nations, but by their writings they could. (3.) If the written word were wanting, the church has nothing to look to but uncertain traditions; but the written word is a sure touchstone of doctrines, Isa. viii. 20. a light in a dark place, 2 Pet. i. 19. both of which are most necessary.

3. There is a necessity of it not only for beginners, but for those who are more perfect. The scripture is written for all indifferently, Col. iii. 16. Even the most perfect will find enough there, and more than they are able for: 'Open thou mine eyes,' says David, 'that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,' Psal. cxix. 18. It is but the blindness of enthusiasts to pretend, that it is only for the weaker, and that the more perfect must follow the Spirit: for if that Spirit teach any thing contrary to the written word, it is a spirit of darkness, Isa. viii. 20.; yea, if it teach another doctrine, an anathema is pronounced against it, Gal. i. 8.

Thus it plainly appears, that nothing short of scripture-revelation is sufficient to salvation, and that in an objective way; that is, that it is a sufficient rule to lead men to salvation. But something else is requisite to make this rule effectual for that end. No skill or wisdom of men representing them in the clearest point of view, nor all the power of the most elaborate and persuasive reasonings, can produce this effect. This work is the province of the Spirit of

God, which he accomplishes by an internal illumination of the mind, giving blinded sinners a saving discovery of divine truths; by powerfully subduing man's obstinate will, and enabling it cheerfully and readily to obey the will of God and the authority of Christ; and by working upon our affections, exciting in us ardent desires after God and Christ, and a high esteem of divine truth, and removing the prejudices in our minds against it, and opening our hearts to receive the word, and comply with the design thereof.

IV. I shall next shew that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God. Christ is God's personal word, but the scriptures are his written word, Hos. i. 2.

The scriptures appear to be the word of God, if we consider,

1. The antiquity of some parts of them, which are more ancient than any human writings, and give us such an history as none but God himself could do, viz. the creation of the world; for how could men tell what was done before man had a being?

2. The preservation of it to this day, notwithstanding the malice of devils and wicked men against it. If it had not been of God, it could not have continued till now, considering the attempts that have been made to destroy it.

3. The candour and sincerity of the penmen of these sacred writings, who honestly declare what they delivered was received from God, plainly tell their own faults as well as those of others, and every way write as men over-ruled by the Spirit of God.

4. The exact performance of scripture-prophecies. Isaiah prophesied that Cyrus should deliver the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, not only before that captivity took place, but more than an hundred years before that prince was born. Jeremiah, a little before that captivity, foretold it should last seventy years, and that was the precise duration of it. How remarkably have all the prophecies relating to the fall of the Babylonish, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies been fulfilled! And what an exact accomplishment has there been of the several prophecies relating to the birth and death of Christ, and the spreading of his kingdom in the world! The scripture contains many other prophecies which time has shewn exactly performed, and many that are yet to be fulfilled.

5. The blood of many martyrs hath confirmed the divinity of this book, while they joyfully laid down their lives for the truth of it; in which it is evident they were carried up above what human power could do.

6. The scriptures have been confirmed by incontrovertible miracles. All miracles are wrought by God himself; and it is inconsistent with his holy nature to work miracles for confirming a lie

or a cheat. Many miracles were wrought by Moses, by Christ, and by his apostles. If then these miracles were done by them, the doctrine they taught was true. Now, we have all rational grounds to suppose, that these miracles were really wrought. It is certain, that the general consent of those who have heard of them goes that way. Now, if it be supposed a cheat that such things were done, then that cheat took place either among those who were said to have seen them, and were witnesses to them or else among those who lived after that generation which is said to have seen them was dead and gone. But neither of these two can be said here. Not the first, for two reasons. (1.) Because these miracles were such things as men's outward senses (their eyes and ears) could be judges of. (2.) They are said to be done, not in a corner, but in the face of the world. Therefore it was impossible that that generation could be imposed upon. If a man should say, that yesterday he divided the river Tweed in presence of us all, and brought us all through on dry land, it would be impossible for him to make us believe it, for we saw no such thing, nor waded so through that river. Or if he should say, that he came to the church-yard, and raised a dead man in our presence, whom we now see among us, he could never cause us believe it, nor cheat us into a persuasion of the same. Neither could any in after generations invent such a story, and impose the cheat upon others. (1.) Because there are some things done in memory of these miracles. (2.) Such observances did commence from the time that such things were done, as circumcision, the passover, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. If then the forger would impose it on others, he must make them believe, that these observances have been constantly in use since that time, which, if they were not, could not be believed, because it contradicts the senses: for it would be impossible to make a nation believe that they were all circumcised or baptized, when there was no such thing; and especially that such things were done to them in memory of such a thing as they never heard of.

7. The scriptures must either be from God, or the creature. They cannot be from the creature; for if so, they must be from angels or men. Neither of these can be said. Not the first; for then they should either be from good angels or evil angels. From good angels they cannot be, in regard, they say, they are the word of God, and this would be a most gross cheat which cannot be attributed to good angels; for angels imposing such a cheat on the world could no more be looked on as good, but as evil. With what shadow of reason can it be imagined, that good angels, remaining so, should abuse the name of God, as to speak in his name, what he

never said? Evil angels it cannot be either, in regard the scripture doth natively tend to overturn the devil's kingdom; it pronounces their doom, discovers their malicious designs, brings men out of their service, and from doing what is pleasing to them. The same way may we reason concerning good or bad men their being the principal authors of the scriptures. And you know what torment the scripture assigns to liars. It remains then that the scripture is of divine inspiration.

Besides, such things are found in the scripture themselves, as do plainly demonstrate they are the word of God. As,

1. The heavenliness of the matter of the scripture, shews it to be of a divine origin. Therefore they are called *the holy scriptures*, Rom. i. 2. See Psal. xii. 6. Nothing carnal or earthly is delivered therein, but all is what becomes those who live above the world, and shall shine in glory. I take this heavenliness of the matter to respect two things. (1.) The sublime mysteries therein revealed, which nature ever so much elevated could never attain to the discovery of. Such is the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the spiritual union betwixt Christ and believers. The light of nature improved by the learned to the utmost advantage, could not teach these things; yet a few fishermen plainly delivered them. (2.) The most exact holiness of its precepts, commanding all holiness, and forbidding all impurity of heart and life under the pain of damnation; and that so universally, as all the writings of philosophers have come far short of. Here we are taught to love our enemies, to be truly and thoroughly humble and self-denied; and this urged by such arguments as may be most effectual for inciting men to the practice of these duties. Sure this could neither be the work of men, being so opposite to corrupt nature, nor of devils being so opposite to their kingdom and interest, but of that God who is holy, and loveth righteousness.

2. The efficacy of the doctrine, in its convincing and searching the conscience, Heb. iv. 12.; converting the soul from its most beloved lusts, even when nothing can be expected from the world for such a change but the cross, Psal. xix. 7.; rejoicing the heart under the deepest distresses, ver. 8. This efficacy lies not in the bare words, letters, or syllables, which have no other power than to signify the things; but it is the ordinary means which the Spirit makes use of for these ends, without which it will be but a dead letter.

3. The majesty and sublimity of the style, an elevated and grand diction which runs through many passages of the scriptures, particularly in the books of Moses, some parts of the Psalms, in the book of Job, and the writings of the prophets. There are in several pas-

sages of the Old Testament such a loftiness of style, so grand an assemblage of bold images and representations, such a collection of noble and majestic sentiments, and so much magnificence and pomp of language, as cannot be found in any human writings whatever. There is something so truly majestic and sublime, so grand and magnificent in the style of the sacred writings, as has forced heathen philosophers to acknowledge it, and select passages therefrom as instances of the true sublime; as does Longinus with regard to the words of God, *Let there be*, and some other passages. At the same time let it be observed, that there is nothing affected, no flights of false eloquence, no exertions of a luxuriant genius, no laboured strokes of a warm imagination, no forced images, no distorted metaphors, no quaint allusions, or unnatural comparisons which are frequently found in the most admired productions of ancient and modern writers; but the utmost plainness and perspicuity, a noble simplicity, and an elegant familiarity, level to the capacity of the illiterate, reign throughout the sacred volume. So that its style must engage the attention and regard of the learned philosopher and poet, and delight the unlearned peasant. Thus God is frequently brought in speaking to and by the prophets, and his majesty set forth in a majestic style, as Is. lvii. 15. 'Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy,' &c. There is no affectation of words there, being below the majesty of the divine law: none are spared, but the scripture speaks as freely and plainly to the great as to the small, to the rich as to the poor.

4. The consent of all the parts of scripture; though written by several hands, and at different times, yet all of them so agreeing in their precepts, narratives of matters of fact, and designs, that there is no irreconcileable difference to be found amongst them. But here the Socinians call us to consider this point at more length; for they say that there is some repugnancy in the scriptures in some things of little or no moment, and that not a seeming but real repugnancy. But we believe that in nothing does one holy writer differ from another in the scriptures, but that such things as seem to be repugnant do in themselves most exactly agree. This principle I shall endeavour to prove.

(1.) There are no things in the Scriptures of little or no moment; and if so, the writers could not err in them. That there are no such things in it; the scripture plainly teaches, as in the text, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable*, &c. Rom. xv. 4. 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures,

might have hope.' The Jews said, that there was not one point in scripture but mountains of mysteries hang on it. See Matth. v. 18. It argues a profane spirit to talk of the scriptures at that rate. The people of God know that many a time they have read over a scripture in which they could see little or nothing, but afterwards they have seen a great deal in it when the Spirit hath been commentator: and though in some things we never see any weighty thing, must we therefore conclude that there is none there?

(2.) The holy penmen were, in all that they wrote, acted and guided by the Spirit of God, or wrote all by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as says the text, and 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. If all scripture was given by inspiration, if no scripture be of private interpretation, nor came by the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, how can there be any error in any passage of scripture? If the scriptures be the word of God, they must be altogether pure, Psal. xix. 7, 8.

(3.) Those things in which there is some repugnancy betwixt the penmen of the scriptures, are either a part of the canonical scripture, or not. If they be, then [1.] All scripture is not given by inspiration of God. [2.] The scriptures are holy scriptures, Rom. i. 2.; but errors, whether in greater or lesser things, are unholy, and cannot be a part of the holy scriptures. If they be no part of the holy scriptures, why do they charge the holy scriptures with errors therein?

(4.) If it be so that there is such repugnancy in the scriptures, then they cannot found certain and divine faith; for a fallible testimony can ground only a fallible belief. And how shall we know when they are right, and when they are wrong? One says that he is guided by the Spirit, and tells us such a thing; another says the same, and tells us the contrary: Whom shall we believe? If you say it must be determined by the greater number of the holy penmen, it is well known, that amongst those who are fallible, one may be righter than many. But this is plainly to lean to human testimony; for one speaking by the Spirit is as much to be believed as ten thousand. So that this truly dissolves the authority of the whole scriptures.

In short, we refuse that there are any real inconsistencies or contradictions in the holy oracles of God. Whatever seeming inconsistencies or repugnancies there may be, they may be easily reconciled, and have been actually reconciled to satisfy every sober person, by many learned divines, whose writings may be consulted on this head.

5. This scope of the whole scriptures, which is to give all glory to God. The design of them is to exalt none but the infinite majesty

of Heaven, to humble all mankind, and empty them of themselves, that God's grace may be all, and men themselves nothing, but entirely dependent on the mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

6. The full discovery it makes of the way of man's salvation. Who could ever have told of the Son of God his dying for the sins of the elect, and have made a discovery of the way of salvation by faith, which the scripture hath plainly set down?

7. The entire perfection of the scripture; that is, the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture.

There are two ways how matters of faith and life are set down in the scriptures. The one is when the thing is set down expressly in so many words; as the unlawfulness of murder, when it is said, 'Thou shalt not kill;' the ordinance of baptism, as in that, 'Go and teach all nations, baptising them,' &c. The other is by good and necessary consequence, which is when the thing itself is not found in the scriptures in so many words, but doth evidently (in itself) and necessarily flow from the express words of scripture, as the baptising of infants is by good and necessary consequence drawn from that, 'Go ye, and baptise all nations.'

Here I shall first prove, that, besides what is to be found in express words in the scriptures, good and necessary consequences deduced therefrom are also to be admitted, as truly binding as what is declared in express words there, whether in fundamentals or in such things as are built on the foundation. If one can prove any thing by good and necessary consequence from the scripture, it is all one, as to the binding power on men's consciences, as if it were expressly set down in so many words.

(1.) Good and necessary consequences are such as the word is designed for. What is deduced from them, so is indeed the sense and meaning of the words; and if you have the words without the meaning of them, or without the full meaning of them, in so far ye come short of the true intent of the words. If I bid a man draw near the fire, do I not desire him to warm himself, though I speak not one word of his warming himself? Were not the scriptures written for that end, that 'we through patience and comfort of them might have hope?' Rom. xv. 4. But this cannot be obtained without the use of consequences. Are they not profitable for doctrine,—'that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?' 2 Tim. iii. 16. But can this be had without the use of consequences?

(2.) The great fundamental article, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, before the New Testament was written, could not be proved to the Jews by express scripture testimony, but by good and necessary consequence; yet Christ tells them that there could be no salvation for them without the belief of this. 'If ye believe not that I am he (the Messiah),' says he, 'ye shall die in your sins.' John viii. 24.

(3.) Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, while he would prove the fundamental article of the resurrection against the Sadducees, does not seek after a text that said in express words, that the dead shall rise again, but proves it by good consequence, yet no less firmly than if he had produced an express text for it, Matth. xxii. 32. And it is no less evident that the apostles follow him in this method; as in treating of the resurrection of Christ, Acts ii. 25. of the resurrection of all mankind, 1 Cor. xv. and of the justification of a sinner before God, in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians.

(4.) Such as reject all arguing from scripture by consequences, must either confess that by no scripture this way is condemned, or else they must adduce some express scripture text forbidding it. The last they can never do. If they say the first, then it is approved; otherwise the scripture is no perfect rule of faith and practice, which we shall immediately shew to be false. If they say that the scripture leaves it indifferent, then I ask, how dare they condemn it?

(5.) Refusing to admit good and necessary consequences from scripture, overturns all religion, both law and gospel, faith and practice. For how shall it be proved, that John or James are obliged to obey the law, and believe the gospel but by consequence? where will they find an express text for these? Only the law speaks to all, the gospel to every hearer of it, and consequently they oblige thee and me. This way, then, of any doctrine its being set down in the scripture being admitted, we are to prove next.

That the scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and manner; or that the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down therein, &c.

1. God hath expressly forbidden to add any thing unto his word; therefore it needs no addition, and so is perfect Deut. iv. 2. 'Ye shall not add unto the word that I command you.' Consider what ye speak of; even of statutes and judgments; statutes, ceremonies, and rites of worship; even to these he will have nothing added. So we have all additions prohibited, Prov. xxx. 6; and that under a severe penalty, Rev. xxii. 18.

2. 'The law of the Lord is perfect,' as is expressly asserted, Psal. xix. 8. There it is said of it, (1.) it converts the soul; (2.) makes wise the simple; (3.) rejoiceth the heart; and (4.) enlightens the eyes. The apostle plainly asserts the perfection of it, while he tells us, 2 Tim. iii. 15. that it is 'able to make a man wise unto salvation.' How can it be so, unless it teach all things necessary to salvation? *It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, &c.* What can be desired more? And that ye may be sure there is nothing wanting in it, he tells you, it is given for that purpose, 'that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' So Christ saith, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them,' Luke xvi. 29.; clearly importing, that in them is contained what is sufficient to salvation.

3. Consider the end for which the scriptures were written, even 'that believing men may have life,' John xx. 31.; that 'through patience and comfort of the scriptures they might have hope,' Rom. xv. 4. If any thing necessary to salvation were not in them, how would they answer the end for which they were written?

4. The Lord Jesus taught his disciples all that he had heard of the Father, viz. necessary to their salvation, John xv. 15. He commissions them to teach all others, even to the end of the world, what he commanded them, Matth. xxviii. 20. But this they could not do *viva voce;* therefore they did it in their writings. And whoso considers how exact the apostles were of teaching things of lesser moment, as what day the collection for the poor should be made, &c. cannot think they would neglect any thing necessary to salvation, unless they could not through ignorance or forgetfulness; neither of which can be imputed to them in their writings, being led by the Spirit of God infallibly.

5. The nature of the scriptures teaches us their perfection. For if they be not perfect they cannot be a rule; for a rule must always be commensurable to the thing to be regulated. They are Christ's testament, to which nothing is to be added, being confirmed.

I shall now deduce some inferences from this subject.

1. The holy penmen of the scriptures had a command from God to write, and did not write only occasionally without a command. For that inspiration was an internal command, whereby the Spirit moved them to write, 2 Pet. i. 21.

2. The penmen of the scriptures were infallible in their writing, so that they were not mistaken in any thing, even of the least moment: far less is there any real contradiction among them, being all guided by the same Spirit, who inspired the very words, and kept them from all error, 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

3. The authority of the scripture in itself, that is, the power it hath to bind the conscience, does not depend on the church, but wholly on God, the author of it. For,

(1.) The church is built upon the scriptures, Eph. ii. 20. 'Upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles.' This foundation is not personal; 'for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ:' but it is doctrinal, the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. Now, it is clear, that the superstructure depends on the foundation, not the foundation on it.

(2.) If the authority of the scriptures depended on the church, then they behoved first of all to believe the authority of the church without the scriptures, and our faith should be built upon human testimony, which is fallible; but we believe the church for the scriptures, and no otherwise, Isa. viii. 20. and human testimony cannot found divine faith.

(3.) Whence can any prove that the church is to be believed but from the scripture? and then to say, that the scriptures must be believed for the church's testimony, is a circle unworthy of men of sense.

(4.) Either the church had reason to receive the scriptures or not. If they had no reason to receive them, they have as little reason to impose them on others. If they had, what was it, but that it was truth, and worthy to be received? Therefore their testimony does not make it truth, or worthy to be believed and obeyed.

(5.) The scripture is God's own word, 2 Tim. iii. 16. How blasphemous is it then to deny faith unto God in the scriptures, while he speaks to us in them, unless the testimony of men give authority to his word? This is as much as to say, that God hath his authority from the church, and that he ought not to be believed or obeyed, unless the church commanded it; which is most blasphemous. Of this blasphemy is the church of Rome guilty, who roundly assert that the authority of the scripture depends on the church. I shall only add, that this is the high way to keep Christians off from convincing Turks, Pagans, and Jews, as to the New Testament, while we tell them that the authority of the scripture, wherein our religion is laid down, depends on the church, and that the scriptures are true, because the church says it.

4. The authority of the scripture as to us is not from the church, but from itself; that is, the reason why we receive the scripture as the word of God, it is not because the church says it is so, but because it evidences itself to be so. For as God's works do themselves tell their Maker, so his word declares the Speaker; so that a spiritual discerner must needs say, on the reading of it, though none

should recommend, it is the voice of God, not of men. Can we discern an unlearned man's letter from that of a learned man? and doth not God's word bear a divine character? It is a light, a lamp, &c. the nature of which is to discover itself. Thus there is objective evidence enough in the scripture; though indeed the subjective evidence cannot be had but by the Spirit of God; so that to him bearing witness by and with the word, we owe the full assurance that it is God's word, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 14. And this is the reason why great scholars may be less persuaded of this truth, than the most unlearned peasants; because, though the sun discovers itself sufficiently, yet blind men cannot see it.

Now, that the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word, I shall prove by the following arguments.

I. The scripture makes this inward illumination of the Spirit of God necessary for understanding the scriptures, while it ascribes the same wholly unto the Spirit, Matth. xvi. 17. 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it, [Christ's being the Son of the living God] unto thee, but my father which is in heaven;' 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12. 'God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' If the Spirit of God take the same unto himself as his own proper work, how can any arrogate it to themselves, as if by the power of nature they were able for it?

2. There is an utter inability in man by nature to know savingly the things of God. They are above his capacity while he remains in his natural state, and nothing can act beyond the sphere of its activity. This is plain from 1 Cor. ii. 14. where not only the act of receiving them is denied to natural men, but the very power of discerning them; and the reason is given, 'because they are spiritually discerned,' and he wants the organ of discerning spiritually. And this discerning is appropriated to the spiritual man, ver. 15. Had not the Israelites in the wilderness very great external helps to gain the knowledge of the things of God, Deut. xxix.? but all was ineffectual. What was the want then? See ver. 4. 'The Lord hath not given you (says Moses, to them) an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear.'

3. If it were not the spiritual illumination that gave this saving understanding of the things of God, then the greatest adepts in

human literature would have most of the saving knowledge of such things as are revealed in the word. This plainly follows: But that it is not so, the scripture testifies, 1 Cor. i. 20, 26, 27, 28. 'Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.' Many times it is seen to be quite otherwise. And what makes the difference? See Matth. xi. 25. 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth (says Christ), because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' Even as he hath put this treasure in earthen vessels, to the end the praise might be of God, that it may be seen it is not the act of the preacher, but the power of the Spirit, that gives true understanding.

4. Men without the saving illumination of the Spirit are so far from attaining sufficient knowledge of the things revealed in the word of God, that they judge them foolish, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The doctrine concerning Christ crucified was to the Jews, who had the law and the prophets, a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks, who excelled in human learning, foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23.; yea, no less than madness, Acts xxvi. 24. Nay, even the godly themselves, when without the actual influence of the Spirit, are not far from reckoning as they do who are in nature; as in the case of the apostles, looking on the account brought them of the resurrection of their Lord as an idle tale, and not believing it, Luke xxiv. 11. The doctrine of Christ's resurrection seemed to the disciples as *idle tales;* how much more so to men utterly destitute of the Spirit, who many times are besides judicially blinded? 2 Cor. iv. 4.

5. The Lord promises his Spirit to the end men may be taught to know the truths of God savingly, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. John xiv. 16, 17. and xvi. 12, 13. Has he promised his Spirit in vain? or are we sufficiently furnished already? If so, why does he promise his Spirit?

6. The prayers of the saints for this illumination prove the necessity of it, Psal. cxix. 18. Eph. i. 17, 18. Col. i. 9. And they pray so, because they feel the need of it: the experience of the Spirit is that against which there is no disputing.

7. Let us consider that passage, John vi. 45. 'And they shall be

all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.' It is plain that by coming unto Christ is meant saving faith in him. Now, in order to this there is a promise, that they shall all, viz. all the elect, for faith is the saving faith of God's elect, be taught of God, viz. by the Spirit, not merely by external revelation, because whosoever thus hears comes unto Christ: but it is certain that all come not to Christ that hear, and learn of the Father by external revelation only. From all, which it is evident, that unto the sufficient understanding of the things revealed in the scripture the teaching of the Spirit is necessary; and that all who attain to the saving knowledge of these things do believe.

What then remains upon this head but, that we diligently read the holy scriptures as being the word of God, and the rule which he hath given to direct us both as to faith and practice; and that we fervently pray to God, that he may give us his holy Spirit to enlighten our minds in the saving knowledge of the word, without which we will remain in the dark, and the word will be but a dead letter to us? Lord open our eyes, that we may understand thy word.

THE UTILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES AS A RULE.

I proceed to the consideration of another Doctrine.

DOCT. 'The scriptures are the rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God.'

Here I shall only give the properties of this rule.

1. It is a perspicuous or clear rule. For though all things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due sense of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

(1.) With respect to all things necessary to salvation, whether for faith or practice, it cannot be denied, but there are portions of the scripture very obscure, which possibly are not rightly interpreted even to this day; but in such things as are necessary to salvation, they are clear. And in this respect it hath been said, that the

scriptures are a depth wherein a lamb may wade, and an elephant may swim.

(2.) Though some things, the faith of which is necessary to salvation, be high and incomprehensible mysteries, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Son of God, &c. yet the way of propounding them is clear.

(3.) It may be that what is truly necessary unto salvation may be very obscurely laid down in some place of scripture; yet in some other place we shall find the same thing clearly propounded:

(4.) And that so as not only the learned, but even the unlearned, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them; which you must carefully remember is meant here of believing persons, who have the inward illumination of the Spirit, removing their own natural darkness: for if ye shall understand it of unbelievers, it contradicts what we have laid down above, relating to the necessity of spiritual illumination. And so the sense is, that not only may the learned, but even the unlearned Christian, attain to a sufficient understanding of the word;

(5.) Providing they make use of the ordinary means appointed of God for the understanding of them; reading attentively and devoutly with prayer and meditation on them, &c.

This perspicuity of the scriptures I shall prove by the following arguments.

(1.) The scripture plainly teaches its own perspicuity and clearness in this sense. It is called *a lamp* and *a light*, Psal. cxix. 105. The very 'entrance of it (it is said) gives light and understanding to the simple,' ver. 130. See Prov. vi. 23. The apostle, 2 Pet. i. 19. calls the holy scriptures *a light*, and particularly the word of prophecy, or the prophetic word, which of all the rest seems most dark, yet this he calls *a light* and a shining light, *shining in a dark place;* shewing thereby, that where it comes and shines, though the place be of itself dark, yet it dispels the darkness.

(2.) Such is the way God hath delivered his word, that its commands are not remote from the understanding; the meanest believer hath no reason to complain of the difficulty of it in the things necessary to salvation, Deut. xxx. 11. &c. 'For this command which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off: It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it in unto us, that we may hear it, and do it! But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.'

(3.) If all things necessary to salvation be understood by all sincere Christians, and this by virtue of the Spirit dwelling in every believer, then the scriptures are clear in all things necessary to salvation to the meanest believer. But the former is true: 1 Cor. ii. 15. 'He that is spiritual judgeth all things;' 1 John ii. 20, 27. 'Ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things. The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but the same anointing teacheth you of all things.' Consider to whom John is there speaking, not only to learned men and great divines, but to all believers, even to little children; to all that have the Spirit, which is common to all; 'for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'

(4.) The things that are necessary to salvation are hid only to unbelievers, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their eyes; as for others, God himself hath taught them, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.

(5.) God hath promised to write his law is his people's hearts, and that he himself will teach them to know himself, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; therefore the scripture must needs be perspicuous and clear in things necessary to salvation: for that which is written in our hearts cannot be but clear unto us; and that which God himself teacheth us cannot be obscure, for who teacheth like God?

(6.) If the scriptures be not clear in themselves to all believers, but that all its perspicuity depends on the interpretation of the church, then our faith is to be ultimately resolved into the testimony of man; but that cannot be, for human testimony is not infallible and authentic, and therefore cannot found divine faith and an infallible persuasion. The reason of the consequence is clear. Hearers are obliged if they will not pin their faith on men's sleeves, to compare the interpretations given by men, with the scriptures themselves; which is utterly unpracticable, unless the scriptures be clear in themselves in such things as are necessary to salvation.

(7.) The perspicuity of the scripture appears, if ye consider their author, who is God himself, the Father of lights; and the end for which he gave the scriptures unto the church, viz. that they might be a rule of faith and life. Of his power to speak plainly, who can doubt? and the end for which they are given may sufficiently satisfy as to his will to speak so; for how can they be a rule to us, if wrapt up so as we cannot understand them without the church's interpretation, in those things that are necessary to salvation?

2. It is a perfect rule. There is nothing necessary to be believed or done but what is to be found there. It is a perfect rule for us to walk by in the way to heaven and glory. What can be more desired than that in the text, It is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof,*

for correction, for instruction in righteousness? 'The law of the Lord is perfect,' Psal. xix. 7. The scriptures were written that men might have life, John xx. 31. and comfort and hope in all conditions, Rom. xv. 4. But I insisted on this more fully in the preceding doctrine.

3. It is the only rule. Every doctrine taught any manner of way in religion must be brought to this rule, and if it agree not with it, must be rejected, Isa. viii. 20. Hereby traditions must be tried, Matth. xv. 3; and spirits or revelations, 1 John iv. 1; and nothing must be added to it, Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 18. I shall shut up with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. The opinions of fathers, decrees of councils, acts of assemblies, covenants, and minister's sermons, are not the rule of faith to us; nor can any of them bind us but in so far as they are agreeable to the word of God, by which all of them must be judged and examined, Isa. viii. 20.

2. Translations of the scriptures into the vulgar languages are most necessary and profitable. How otherwise should the unlearned read them, if they were not translated? It was by means of these translations that Romish Babel was brought down at the Reformation, as by the division of tongues the building of old Babel was hindered. And that makes the Papists such enemies to translations of the scriptures. We have reason to bless God for human learning, by which these translations are made, seeing the prophets and apostles wrote in languages which but few understand.

3. This may give us a just abhorrence of Popery, which almost in every point on this head casts dust on the scriptures. The Papists deny the necessity of translations; will not allow the people the free reading of the Bible; cry out on it for its obscurity; accuse it of imperfection; and add their traditions to it, that it may not be the only rule. And thus they blaspheme both God and his word, and expose themselves to that direful threatening, Rev. xxii. 18.

4. This may also give us a just detestation of Quakerism, which sets up the light within men, which in very deed is nothing but a natural conscience, and the spirit without the scriptures, to be a rule to men. But their light is but darkness, and their spirit a spirit of darkness and delusion, if it agree not with the scriptures, Isa. viii. 20. and must be tried and examined by the scriptures, 1 John iv. 1. The Quakers are a dangerous set of people that overturn the foundation of true religion.

5. This may likewise give us a just abhorrence of the superstition and ceremonies of the church of England, wherewith they have corrupted the worship of God, rejecting the simplicity of gospel-

worship, and regulating their worship in many things not by the scripture, but the dregs of Antichrist: Deut iv. 2. 'Ye shall not add unto the word that I command you.' What word? Statutes, ver. 1. ceremonies and rites of worship. To baptize with water is Christ's command; but who has added the sign of the cross? Christ instituted the sacrament of the supper: but who has added kneeling, to overturn the table-gesture, which we have from Christ's own example? The Lord's day is of divine institution: but whose are the numerous holidays observed in the church of England? Matth. xv. 9. What is all this but an accusing the scripture of imperfection, as if God had not laid down a sufficient rule to teach us how we may glorify him: as if they were ashamed of simple scripture-worship, but they must deck it up in the whorish garments made by their own brains? God has a special zeal for his worship; and it becomes us to quicken our zeal for it, in a time when enemies are bringing in innovations in worship into this church, and setting up their Dagon beside the ark. But though God should, for our contempt of our pure worship, plague the land with this superstitious worship once more, yet as sure as Babylon shall fall, it shall fall and flee before the glory of the latter days.

6. *Lastly*, Be exhorted to study the holy scriptures. Read them in your families, and read them in secret, and cry for the Holy Spirit, who dictated them, to make you understand them. Lock them not up in your chests, and let them not lie dusty in your windows, as too many do to their shame and disgrace, lest the dust of them witness against you. Prefer the Bible to all other books, as the book whereof God himself is the author. Prize and esteem it, as showing you the way to salvation, as a lamp to your feet, and a light to your paths.

THE SCOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

1 Tim. i. 13.—*Hold fast the form of sound words—in faith and love.*

In these words there is, (1.) The character of scripture-doctrine; it is *sound words;* sound and pure in itself, and sound in its effects, being of a soul-healing virtue, Ezek. xlvii. 9. (2.) The sum of it, *faith*, shewing what we are to believe; and *love*, what we are to do, 1 John v. 3. John xiv. 15. This love has a particular relation to Christ, all our obedience being to be offered unto God through him, as our faith fixes on God through him. This was what the apostle preached. (3.) Our duty with respect to it; to *hold fast the form of sound words.* This signifies, [1.] To have a pattern of the doctrine in our minds, to which all that ministers teach must be conformable. (2.) To hold it fast; to cleave to, and keep hold of it, without flinching from it, whatever dangers or difficulties may attend the doing so. Both these senses are implied in the words.

The text affords the following doctrinal proposition.

Doct. "The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man."

As to the matter of scripture-doctrine.

1. Some things are taught in the scriptures less principally; that is, the main design of the scriptures is not to teach these things; neither are they taught for themselves, but for the respect they have to other things. Thus in the scripture we may learn the knowledge of several natural things, as of the nature of some trees, birds, beasts, &c. of husbandry, the customs of several nations, especially of the Jews, &c. But these and such like things are only taught in the scripture, as having some respect to our faith and obedience. So the vine tree is described, Ezek. xv. to hold forth the uselessness of barren professors, &c. However, whatsoever is taught in the scriptures, seeing the scripture is God's word, is all to be received by divine faith, though all scripture-truths are not of equal importance.

2. The scripture teaches some things chiefly. And these are faith and obedience. These are the two parts of the doctrine of the Bible. Whatsoever concerns religion, or the salvation of souls, in the Old and New Testament, may be reduced to one of these two heads: It is either an article of faith, or a point of obedience.

Here I shall consider,

I. The nature of faith and obedience, and the connection betwixt the two.

II. The manner of the scripture's teaching.

III. The sense of scripture.

IV. Shew that the Spirit of God speaking in the scriptures is the supreme judge of controversies in religion.

I. Let us consider the nature of that faith and obedience which the scripture teaches, with the connexion betwixt the two.

First, As to faith. Divine faith is a believing of what God has revealed, because God has said it, or revealed it. People may believe scripture-truths, but not with a divine faith, unless they believe it on that very ground, the authority of God speaking in his word. And this divine faith is the product of the Spirit of God in the heart of a sinner, implanting the habit or principle of faith there, and exciting it to a hearty reception and firm belief of whatever God reveals in his word. And the faith which the scripture teaches is what a man is to believe concerning God. This may be reduced to four heads: What God is, the persons in the Godhead, the decrees of God relating to every thing that comes to pass, and the execution of them in his works of creation and providence. Now, though the works of creation and providence shew that there is a God, yet that fundamental truth, that God is, and the doctrines relating to the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence, God's acts and purposes, the creation of all things, the state of man at his creation, his fall, and his recovery by the mediation and satisfaction of Christ, are only to be learned from the holy scriptures. Hence we may infer,

1. That there can be no right knowledge of God acquired in an ordinary way without the scriptures, Matt. xxii. 29. "Ye do err (said Christ to the Sadducees), not knowing the scriptures." As there must be a dark night where the light is gone, so those places of the earth must needs be dark, and without the saving knowledge of God, that want the scriptures. Thus the Apostle tells the Ephesians, that, before they were visited with the light of the gospel, they were "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. ii. 12.

2. That where the scriptures are not known, there can be no saving faith. For, says the apostle, Rom. x. 14, 15, 17. 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good

things! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'

3. That there is nothing we are bound to believe as a part of faith but what the scripture teaches, be who they will that propose it, and whatever they may pretend for their warrant. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because their is no light in them,' Isa. viii. 20. No man must be our master in these things: 'For one is our master, even Christ,' Matth. xxiii. 10. He is Lord of our faith, and we are bound to believe whatever he has revealed in his word.

Secondly, As to obedience, it is that duty which God requires of man. It is that duty and obedience which man owes to God, to his will and laws, in respect of God's universal supremacy and sovereign authority over man; and which he should render to him out of love and gratitude. The scriptures are the holy oracle from whence we are to learn our duty, Psal. xix. 11. 'By them is thy servant warned,' says David. The Bible is the light we are to take heed to, that we may know how to steer our course, and order the several steps of our life. 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light to my path,' says the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 105. From whence we may infer.

1. That there can be no sufficient knowledge of the duty which we owe to God without the scriptures. Though the light of nature does in some measure shew our duty to God, yet it is too dim to take up the will of God sufficiently in order to salvation.

2. That there can be no right obedience yielded to God without them. Men that walk in the dark must needs stumble; and the works that are wrought in the dark will never abide the light; for there is no working rightly by guess in this matter. All proper obedience to God must be learned from the scriptures.

3. That there is no point of duty that we are called to, but what the scripture teaches, Isa. viii. 20. forecited. Men must neither make duties to themselves, or others, but what God has made duty. The law of God is exceeding broad, and reaches the whole conversation of man, outward and inward, Psal. xix. and man is bound to conform himself to it alone as the rule of his duty.

Thirdly, As to the connexion of these two, faith and obedience are joined together, because there is no true faith but what is followed with obedience, and no true obedience but what flows from faith. Faith is the loadstone of obedience, and obedience the touchstone of faith, as appears from Jam. ii. *passim*. They that want faith cannot be holy; and they that have true faith, their faith will work by love. Hence we may see,

1. That faith is the foundation of duty or obedience, and not obedience or duty the foundation of faith, Tit iii. 8. and that the things to be believed are placed before the things to be practised, in order to distinguish between the order of things in the covenant of grace, and what they were under the covenant of works. Under the latter, doing, or perfect obedience to the law, was the foundation of the promised privilege of life; but under the former, the promise is to be believed, and the promised life is to be freely received: and thereupon follows the believer's obedience to the law, out of gratitude and love for the mercy received. This appears from the order laid down by God himself in delivering the moral law from mount Sinai. He lays the foundation of faith, first of all, in these words, 'I am the Lord thy God,' &c. which is the sum and substance of the covenant of grace; and then follows the law of the ten commandments, which is as it were grafted upon this declaration of sovereign grace and love, Exod. xx. 2,—18. And let it be remembered, that the apostle Paul calls gospel-obedience the obedience of faith as springing from and founded upon faith. And if we examine the order of doctrine laid down in all his epistles, we shall find, that he first propounds the doctrine of faith, or what man is to believe, and upon that foundation inculcates the duties that are to be practised.

2. That all works without faith are dead, and so cannot please God. For whatsoever is not of faith is sin; and without or separate from Christ we can do nothing. Faith is the principle of all holy and acceptable obedience.

3. That those who inculcate moral duties without discovering the necessity of regeneration, and union with Christ, as the source of all true obedience, are foolish builders; they lay their foundation on the sand, and the superstructure they raise will soon be overturned; and they pervert the gospel of Christ. Such would do well to consider what the Apostle says, Gal. i. 9. 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than ye have received, let him be accursed.

II. I proceed now to consider the manner of the scripture's teaching.

1. The scripture teaches some things expressly in so many words; as, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' &c. Other things it teaches by good and necessary consequence; as, that infants are to be baptized. Now, whatever can be proved by just and necessary consequence from sacred writ, is all one, as to the binding power on men's consciences, as if it were taught there in so many words, whether it be in points of faith or obedience.

2. The scriptures teach but externally. It is the Spirit that

teaches internally. The scriptures externally reveal what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man; but the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the scriptures, for several reasons which I mentioned in the former discourse, and shall not now repeat.

III. I come now to consider the sense of the scripture.

1. The sense of the scripture is but one, and not manifold. There may be several parts of that one sense subordinate one to another; as some prophecies have a respect to the deliverance from Babylon, the spiritual by Christ, and the eternal in heaven; and some passages have one thing that is typical of another: yet these are but one full sense, only that may be of two sorts; one is simple, and another compound. Some scriptures have only a simple sense, containing a declaration of one thing only; and that is either proper or figurative. A proper sense is that which arises from the words taken properly, and the figurative from the words taken figuratively. Some have a simple proper sense, as, 'God is a Spirit, God created the heavens and the earth;' which are to be understood according to the propriety of the words. Some have a simple figurative sense; as, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away,' &c. These have but one simple sense; but then it is the figurative, and is not to be understood according to the propriety of the words, as if Christ were a tree, &c. Thus you see what the simple sense is. The compound or mixed sense is found wherein one thing is held forth as a type of the other; and so it consists of two parts, the one respecting the type, the other the antitype; which are not two senses, but two parts of that one and entire sense intended by the Holy Ghost: *e. g.* Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that those who were stung by the fiery serpents might look to it and be healed. The full sense of which is, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that, &c. even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Here is a literal and mystical sense, which make up one full sense betwixt them. Those scriptures that have this compound sense are sometimes fulfilled properly (or literally, as it is taken in opposition to figuratively) in the type and antitype both; as Hos. xi. 1. 'I have called my Son out of Egypt,' which was literally true both of Israel and Christ. Sometimes figuratively in the type, and properly in the antitype, as Psal. lxix. 21. 'They gave me vinegar to drink.' Sometimes properly in the type, and figuratively in the antitype, as Psal. ii. 9. 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of

iron.' Compare 2 Sam. xii. 31. Sometimes figuratively in both, as Psal. xli. 9. 'Yea mine own familiar friend—hath lifted up his heel against me;' which is meant of Ahitophel and Judas. Now the sense of the scripture must be but one, and not manifold, that is, quite different and no wise subordinate one to another, because of the unity of truth, and because of the perspicuity of the scripture.

2. Where there is a question about the true sense of scripture, it must be found out what it is by searching other places that speak more clearly, the scripture itself being the infallible rule of interpreting scripture. Now that it is so, appears from the following arguments.

(1.) The Holy Spirit gives this as a rule, 2 Pet. i. 20. 21. After the apostle had called the Christians to take heed to the scripture, he gives them this rule for understanding it, 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, *tes ideas e-piluseos*, of our own exposition. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' As it came; so it is to be expounded: but it came not by the will of man; therefore we are not to rest on men for the sense of it, but holy men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and so never erring; therefore we are to look to the dictates of the same Spirit in other places.

(2.) There are several approved examples of this, comparing one scripture with another, to find out the meaning of the Holy Ghost; as Acts xv. 15. 'And to this agree the words of the prophet,' &c. The Bereans are commended for this, Acts xvii. 11. Yea, Christ himself makes use of this to shew the true sense of the scripture against the devil, Matth. iv. 6. 'Cast thyself down, (said that wicked spirit): for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee,' &c. Ver. 7. 'It is written again, (says Christ), Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' And thus our Lord makes out the true sense of that scripture, that it is to be understood only with respect to them who do not cast themselves on a tempting of God. Some more will occur concerning this point under the next head.

This then is the great, chief, and infallible rule of interpretation of scripture, to compare one passage with another. Other things may be added as helps and means in order to find out the true sense.

1. The knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek, in which languages the prophets and apostles wrote, is an excellent mean to the right understanding of the scriptures. These original tongues are the best commentaries on scripture; and many times it is found so by those that know them.

2. Diligently consider the scope and design of the Holy Ghost in the portion of scripture where ye find difficulty, the coherence and context, with all circumstances going before and following. *Nullo est objectio in lege quæ non habet solutionem in latere* says a rabbi, *Quis scopus, impellens, sedes, tempusque, locusque, et modus, hæc septem scripturæ attendito lector.*

3. Distinguish proper from improper words. The scripture frequently uses improper and figurative expressions, which, if taken as the letters sound, will found a very absurd sense.

4. The commentaries of godly and learned writers are not to be neglected.

5. The reading also of profane history is of notable use in the knowledge of the prophetical writings. And the knowledge of the Jewish customs brings great light to the scriptures.

6. *Lastly*, Always take heed to the analogy of faith, and see there be no deviating therefrom: for the Spirit of God speaking in the scripture is always one and the same; and therefore we are never to think that one scripture can be contrary to another, or the known doctrine of the Bible and the form of sound words: *e. g.* 'This is my body which is broken for you;' it cannot be so understood as if Christ's body were locally present in the sacrament; because we believe, according to the constant doctrine of scripture, that Christ is ascended into heaven, and will come again at the last day; and till then the heavens must contain him. So we must not take the words literally, when it is contrary to modesty, as when Isaiah is bid go naked, Isa. xx. 2.; or to piety, to cut off the right hand, &c. More particularly,

1. Go to God for his Spirit to teach you, Psal. cxix. 18. It is Christ's work to give people to understand the scriptures. If you would know what Paul says, pray for the spirit by which he wrote.

2. Take heed of a carnal, earthly, and fleshly mind. When the heart is carnal, the mind is much blinded, and so utterly unfit for searching the scriptures.

3. Endeavour to be exercised unto godliness. An exercised frame proves sometimes an excellent commentator.

4. *Lastly*, Endeavour to practise what you know.

IV. I proceed to shew that the spirit of God speaking in scripture is the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest.

This is a very important point, and upon it depends the whole of religion. One man says so, another man says otherwise: the ques-

tion is, Who shall be judge, and to whose determination are we to stand and acquiesce in? Four sundry ways do men go here.

First, Enthusiasts set up the private spirit, and its revelations, without the Spirit, for the judge of controversies. But whatever these may pretend, the scripture is our only rule. For,

1. Whatever revelation or light men may pretend to, God binds them and us to the written word, Isa. viii. 20. 'If they speak not according to the scriptures,' it is not true light, but 'because there is no light in them,' that makes it so: for going against the word, they shew themselves to be acted with a spirit of delusion, 1 John iv. 6.

2. The Apostle Paul devotes them to a curse, though they were angels, who preach any other gospel than what he preached, and the Galatians received from his hand, Gal. i. 8, 9; not only a gospel contrary to it, but *another*, any thing diverse from or besides it, though not contrary to it. And if it be contrary the Spirit is contrary to himself, for he is the author of the scriptures.

3. We are commanded to 'try the spirits,' 1 John iv. 1. Now, how must they be tried but by a rule; and what rule have we to try them by but the written word? This was the rule which the Bereans made use of to try the spirit of the apostles, for which they are highly commended. It is that rule which Christ sends the Pharisees to try his own doctrine by, John v. 40. But by the scriptures we cannot try the spirits, unless we lay them to that rule, and observe whether or not the spirits speak as the scriptures do; and then how can the new revelations be received?

4. The spirit's revelations are either a complete or partial rule. If our complete rule, then the scriptures are useless which is blasphemous, and contrary to all those commands that requires us to give attendance to the reading, searching, &c. of them. If they be a partial rule only, then they either teach according to the scripture, or not. If according to it, then it is no new revelation, but what the scripture already affords us. If not, it is because there is no light in them, Isa. viii. 20.

There is one scripture that we must more narrowly inquire into, both because it is abused by the adversaries in this point, and affords us an argument for our doctrine, The passage is, 2 Pet. i. 19. 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.' Enthusiasts here, by the day-star arising in the heart, understand some extraordinary revelation and light which God sets up in the soul, which when it is set up, the person is to take heed to the written word no

longer. But, (1.) Whither would these men drive us? They tell us, that all men have a light within them, according to which they must walk; and this is the spirit within us; yet must we still expect a new light to turn us off from the scriptures; (2.) The apostle here plainly prefers the word of prophecy unto an immediate voice from heaven, and that in the very same thing wherein they both agree: how much more preferable is the scripture to new revelations? (3.) This supposes, that the apostles and believers in those days had not this light; for they say, 'We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.' This being so, we envy not the Quakers their light, which the apostles and these Christians were strangers to.

Some by the day dawning and the day-star arising understand the more clear dispensation which they suppose is to come in the latter days. Others understand by it the sight of God and Christ in glory, till which time the scriptures must be made use of, but no longer. Others understand this as spoken to the believing Jews in reference to the prophets of the Old Testament, to which they did well to take heed, till their gospel light should shine more clearly. Some say, the word *until* is not to be taken exclusively of the time following that dawning of the day, and day star arising; and thereby understand simply more clear light arising after some darkness, which the people of God may be in for a time; till which light arising they are to take heed to the scriptures; not that they are then to give over taking heed to them. Laying aside that which relates to a more clear dispensation yet to come, because it supposes that then the scriptures must be laid aside, which is very contrary to the scripture, for the Spirit shall never in this life justle out the word, but his office is to teach, not new things unwritten, but whatever Christ spoke to his disciples: 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance, (says he), whatsoever I have said unto you,' John xiv. 26: Laying aside that, it is hard to determine which of the rest is indeed the true meaning of the apostle. Only it seems to bid fairest for the apostle's sense, to say, that he speaks of the more clear knowledge of Christ which the believers at that time were afterwards to have, till which time they did well to take heed to the prophetical word, as it is in the Greek; that is, to the doctrine of the prophets who prophesied of Christ; not that they were then to lay by the use of the prophets, but that then they would be of less use to them than before, when they should attain to a more clear gospel-light; as the candle is of less use when the day dawns than it was before, though it be still useful. And I think it abundantly plain, that the word of prophecy is not here to

be understood generally of the whole scripture, as the other interpretations seem to take it, but particularly of the doctrine of the prophets concerning Christ and the gospel, as appears from the phrase, *the prophetic word*, and the first verse of the following chapter, where he speaks of false prophets that were among the people of the Jews. So by the day-star I understand Christ himself, who is called *the morning star*, Rev. xxii. 16. It is true it is here *Pharphoros*, but there *oster ornithes:* but, for ought I know, the first of these is, *apax legomenon;* and though the words be different, the sense is the same, one thing gets but different names. And Christ is called the day-star or morning-star, which we know are both one thing; because, (1.) As the morning star is the most eminent among the stars, and most lucid, as appears by its shining when the appearance of the sun makes the rest disappear; so there is none like Christ among the sons, Cant. ii. 3. (2.) As the day-star puts an end to the dark night, so doth Christ's arising in the soul put an end to the night of spiritual darkness. Never was the sight of the day-star so refreshful to the weary traveller in the night, as Christ's appearance in and to the soul; only the apostle calls him here rather the day-star than the sun, because he is speaking of his appearance in this life, whereas the full knowledge of him is deferred till his second coming. So the day-dawning is easily understood. And this is expected to rise not absolutely, but comparatively in respect of degrees of fuller manifestation, as he promises to those that continue in his word, and are his disciples indeed, that they shall know the truth, viz. more fully, John viii. 31, 32. And that passage, Hos. vi. 3. 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning,' doth excellently serve to shew us this truth. So there he hath respect to this further manifestation of Christ which they were afterwards to have: but they are not then to give over the prophetic word; for, as was before noticed, the word *until* is not always exclusive of the following time, as Psal. cx. 1. 2 Sam. vi. *ult.*

Now, if the writings of the prophets be more sure than a voice from heaven, and Christians are commended for taking heed to the same; and when the day-star ariseth in the heart, it shews only the same thing more clearly. What place is there left for new revelations against or besides the scriptures?

Secondly, The Papists set the church upon the tribunal: but what that church is, they do not agree among themselves, whether it be the pope, or a council, or both together. However, they assert that there is in the church a visible and infallible judge of controversies in religion. This we deny, and far more that the pope, or a council approved by him, is such a judge. For,

1. The scripture makes no mention of any such judge, in any of the places where the officers of the church are reckoned up, as Rom. xii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. nor any where else. And though negative theology, as they say, is not argumentative, yet that cannot have place here, unless we deny the perfection of the scripture, which we have proved already. A positive institution is requisite here.

2. Our faith must not lean upon the testimony or authority of man, 1 Cor. vii. 23. 'Be not the servants of men,' not bodily but spiritually; 2 Cor. i. 24. 'Not that we have dominion over your faith;' where the apostle declines, in his own name, and in the name of his fellows, the being of such a judge. But our faith leans on the word of God, Eph. ii. 20. 'And are built on the foundation of the prophets,' &c.

3. The doctrine of the church should be examined by the scriptures, Acts xvii. 11. 'These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.' Now he whose sentence is to be examined by another, cannot be the supreme judge of controversies. See Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

4. Neither pope nor council, conjunctly nor severally, have such properties as are requisite to constitute a supreme judge in controversies of religion; they have no infallibility, or testimony thereof; yea, they have many ways deceived and been deceived. We may appeal from them, as being bound to the scriptures, as well as others. And the church, be what it will, must not be judge in its own cause.

5. *Lastly*, Here is a controversy in religion, Who is the supreme judge of controversy in religion? Who must decide this, or be supreme judge here? The church cannot, neither pope nor council so decide it in their own favour. That were absurd. Wherefore the Papists themselves are obliged to make another judge of this controversy; and if so, why not of all?

Thirdly, The Socinians set up reason to be the supreme judge of controversies in religion, to whose determination we ought to stand, and therein to acquiesce. There is no doubt but we have much use for reason in matters of religion; as, (1.) To perceive and understand the things revealed in the scripture, Matth. xiii. 51. (2.) To collate them one with another, Acts xvii. 11. (3.) To explain the same, Neh. viii. 8. (4.) To argue from the scriptures, Matth. xxi. *ult.* (5.) To vindicate the truths from objections, Rom. ix. 19, 20.

That it is not the judge nor the rule, that is, that reason ought not to be admitted of itself, and according to its principles, to determine controversies of religion, is what we assert. To illustrate this by an example, the scripture says, *These three are one;* we say we plainly perceive the scripture says so; and therefore, though our reason cannot comprehend, we will believe it, because it is plain the scripture says so. They say, they cannot believe that there are three persons in the Godhead, and not three gods, because reason is against it; and therefore finding the thing unagreeable to reason, though it were in ever so plain words found in the scripture, they will not believe (as they pretend) it means as the words sound, but will fasten another meaning on the words though never so far fetched. And that it may not be thought that this is the same way that the orthodox go too, in explaining scriptures that are understood figuratively, I shall give an example of that too. The scripture says, Christ is a vine, a door, the bread is his body, &c. We know indeed that this is contrary to reason if expounded literally: but that is not the prime reason why we reject the literal meaning, and on which we build our faith as to the true meaning, as the case is with the Socinians, but because it agrees not with other scriptures to understand it so; which testify that Christ is God and man. Now, that reason is not the supreme judge of controversies in religion, is proved by the following arguments.

1. Reason in an unregenerate man is blind in the matters of God, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' Eph. iv. 17, 18. Eph. v. 8. *Except.* This only respects reason not illustrated by divine revelation. *Ans.* By that illustration of reason by divine revelation, they understand either subjective or objective illustration. If they understand it of subjective illustration, they quit that article of their religion, wherein they believe that the mind of man is capable of itself, without the illumination of the Spirit, to attain sufficient knowledge of the mind of God revealed in the scripture. If of objective illustration, by the mere revelation of these truths, then it is false that they assert: For the apostle opposes here the natural man to the spiritual man; and therefore by the natural man is understood every unregenerate man, even that has these truths revealed to him; for, says the apostle, 'they are foolishness unto him.' Now, how can he judge them foolishness if they be not revealed?

2. Reason is not infallible, and therefore cannot be admitted judge in matters concerning our souls. Reason may be deceived. Rom. iii. 4. and is not this to shake the foundations of religion, and

to pave a way to scepticism and atheism? *Except.* That is not to be feared where sound reason is admitted judge. But why talk they of sound reason? The adversaries themselves will yield, that reason is unsound in the most part of men. We say, that it is not fully sound in the world; for even the best know but in part; darkness remains in some measure on the minds of all men.

3. Reason must be subject to the scripture, and submit itself to be judged by God speaking there, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. 'The weapons of our warfare are—mighty—to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations,—and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' Matters of faith are above the sphere of reason; and therefore as sense is not admitted judge in those things that are above it, so neither reason in those things that are above it, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

4. If reason were the supreme judge of controversies, then our faith should be built on ourselves, and the great reason why we believe any principle of religion would be, because it appears so and so to us; which is most absurd. The scripture teaches otherwise, 1 Thess. ii. 13. 'Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God.' Most plainly does our Lord teach this, John v. 34, 'I receive not testimony from men;' chap. v. 39. 'Search the scriptures.'

Fourthly, The orthodox assert the supreme judge of controversies in religion to be the Holy Spirit speaking in the scriptures. This is proved by the following arguments.

1. In the Old and New Testaments, the Lord still sends us to this judge. So that we may neither turn to the right hand nor left from what he there speaks, Deut. v. 32. and xvii. 11. 'According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee;' Is. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony,' &c.; Luke xvi. 29. 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them;' John v. 39. 'Search the scriptures.' Some hereto refer that passage, Matth. xix. 28. 'Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' In this sense it must be meant of the doctrine they taught as dictated to them by the Holy Ghost.

2. It was the practice of Christ and his apostles to appeal to the Spirit speaking in the scriptures, Matth. iv. where Christ still answers Satan with that, 'It is written,' And so while discoursing with the Sadducees about the resurrection, Matth. xxii. 31, 32. So also in John, chap. v. and x. and Luke xxiv. 44. And so did others, Acts xvii. 11. and xxvi. 22, 23. 2 Pet. i. 19. Acts xv. 15,

16. A careful examination of which passages I recommend to you for your establishment in the truth.

3. To the Spirit of God speaking in the scriptures, and to him only, agree those things that are requisite to constitute one supreme Judge. (1.) We may certainly know that the sentence which he pronounces is true, for he is infallible being God. (2.) We cannot appeal from him, for he is one above whom there is none. (3.) He is no respecter of persons, nor can be biassed in favour of one in preference to another.

Having discussed the doctrinal part of this subject, I shall now conclude with two or three inferences.

Inf. 1. People then should diligently read and study the holy scriptures, in order to their knowing what to believe and what to do. As the scripture is the only rule and test of faith and obedience, let us accomplish a diligent search into it, that we may understand all matters to be believed and practised in order to our salvation, and reject every dictate and every precept, come from what quarter it will, if it be not taught us in the sacred records. We are not to believe any thing to be an article of faith, or a duty that we are to perform, unless it has the sanction of the Spirit of God in the written word, and be enjoined us by that infallible Judge. Let it then be our daily care and principal study to acquaint ourselves with the word of God, and draw from that infallible treasury all our knowledge as to faith and practice.

2. How dangerous must it be to maintain opinions and practices which are evinced to be contrary to the word of God? How hazardous must be the state of those who hold doctrines contrary to and eversive of the foundations of Christianity? Many such doctrines are taught and propagated in our day; such as the tenets of Socinians and Arians, who degrade the Son of God to the rank of a mere creature, and deny his supreme Godhead and essential glory, and impugn his satisfaction; the Arminians, who overturn the doctrine of original sin, assert free will, and stickle for the resistibility of grace, and other things eversive of the doctrine of the Bible; and others who set up creeds, confessions, and covenants of human manufacture, in the place of the infallible oracles of truth.

3. How worthy of reproof are they who make no conscience of reading the scriptures? They seldom look into them, or at most only on a sabbath-day, without giving attention to what they read; and so are grossly ignorant of the first principles of religion.

4. Religion, if it be of the right sort, will be practical religion. A blind obedience, or ignorant obedience, to some of the duties of religion is no better than bodily exercise, which profiteth little.

All right obedience flows from a principle of faith in the heart. True faith will always be productive of, and accompanied with good works. And it is in vain for men to say they have religion, unless they abound in all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God. Let us then shew our faith by our works, in having a respect unto all the commands of God, and doing whatsoever he has enjoined us in his word.

THE SCRIPTURES THE BOOK OF THE LORD, AND THE DILIGENT STUDY AND SEARCH THEREOF RECOMMENDED AND URGED.

ISAIAH XXXIV. 16.—*Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.*

HAVING considered the divine authority of the holy scriptures, and their scope, I come now to recommend unto you the diligent study and search of these sacred oracles, from the text now read.

In the former part of this chapter, there are most terrible threatenings denounced against the enemies of God and his church, which receive not their full accomplishment till the last day, as appears from ver. 4, 10. In the text there is the confirmation of the whole. And therein we have,

1. An intimation that all shall be accomplished according to the word. Wherein two things are to be observed.

(1.) The study of the word required. Where we may notice, (1.) The honourable epithet given to it, *The book of the Lord.* Thus the holy scripture is called, as being of divine original and authority, God himself being the author of it. It is true, that in Isaiah's days, even the canon of the Old Testament was not completed, some of the historical books, and of the prophetical too, not being then written. But the body of the doctrine of the word was comprised in the law, or five books of Moses; and what was afterwards written, was but a building on that foundation, by enlargement, explication, and application. And this prophecy looking as far as the end of the world, the Spirit of God might here have an eye to the complete canon of the Old and New Testament. [2.] The study of it recommended, *Seek out of it.* The word signifies to *inquire, search, seek out;* and imports diligence and earnestness in consulting a thing to learn from it. And so it is emphatically pointed, to denote a vehemency and intenseness of spirit in the study. It does in a great measure

answer that word, Acts xvii. 11—*Searched the scriptures.* We are not only to seek from it, but out of it, or, as the Hebrew signifies, *from in* it, or, as in the Greek, *to* it, and seek *from* it. [3.] The way to study, *read* it. Do not satisfy yourselves to hear it, but read it with your own eyes. For the eye makes ordinarily deeper impression than the ear.

(2.) The accomplishment in the most minute circumstance. [1.] Whereas the Lord had named a great many horrible creatures that should possess the dwellings of his enemies, *none of them shall fail,* they shall all be there. [2.] Whereas he had said they should have their mates, that so their kinds might be continued there, *none* of them shall *want their mate* for that purpose.

2. The confirmation or reason of this accomplishment according to the word. And it hath two parts, namely, that he has spoken the one, and will effectuate the other.

(1.) Himself has spoken the word: *My mouth it hath commanded.* His truth is engaged for its accomplishment. He has commanded, not these creatures, but the word or book, as Psal. cv. 8.—*The word he commanded:* and God is said to command his word, for that he gives it as a lawgiver, of supreme authority. And so this answers to the first part of the intimation.

(2.) He will effectuate the thing in accomplishment of the word: His spirit will gather these creatures. So his power is engaged to make it forthcoming. There seems to be here a remarkable change of the persons. But I am mistaken if *the mouth of the Lord* be not one of the names of Christ in the scripture: Thus, Isa. lxii. 2.—'Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.' Jer. xxiii. 16. 'They speak—not out of the mouth of the Lord.' Compare John i. 18. 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' Heb. i. 1, 2. 'God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.' And so the words run very plainly and exactly according to the original, *For my mouth he hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them.*

Two doctrines naturally arise from the words, viz.

Doct. I. 'The holy scripture is the book of the Lord.'

Doct. II. 'The scripture is a book to be read, carefully, and diligently searched, consulted, and sought into.'

As it is the last of these doctrines I mainly intend to discourse upon, I shall be very brief in the illustration of the first: and though some things to be spoken upon it interfere with what has

been already delivered, I hope it will tend to your establishment in the truth, and the more endear the holy scripture to you.

DOCT. I. 'The holy scripture is the book of the Lord.'

All I intend upon this head is to shew,

I. In what respects the holy scripture is the book of the Lord.

II. That it is so.

III. Make a short improvement.

I. My first province is to shew in what respects the holy scripture is the book of the Lord.

1. The Lord is the subject-matter of that book, as the book of the wars of the Lord. It is the commendation of a book, that it treats of a noble subject; and this book treats of God, the great scope of it being to show what God is, and what his will is. Hence we are commanded to 'hold fast the form of sound words,' 2 Tim. i. 13. If we would know God, and our duty to him, we must turn to this book and learn it.

2. The Lord is the author of it, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God.' And who was fit to make a book on that noble subject but himself? John i. 18. forecited. It is the product of his own unerring Spirit, and so his own book in a most proper sense. It is for this reason that it is called 'the book of the Lord.' It is true, several hands were employed in the writing of it; but yet all and every part of it was from the Lord.

(1.) The motion to write was from the Lord, by a particular impulse on the spirits of the holy penmen, which influenced them to the work, and carried them on it, 2 Pet. i. 21. 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Sometimes they had particular express calls, but they had always this motion powerfully determining and inclining them to the work.

(2.) The matter of their writing was from him. He laid it to their hands, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God.' Some things were matters of pure revelation, that could not be known otherwise; such as things past, whereof there was no manner of record, things to come, things without the reach of men's knowledge, as the thoughts of others. These things they had by immediate suggestion. Some things they might have by other records, their own judgment, or memory. In these the Spirit of the Lord infallibly guided them what to chuse and refuse, strengthened their judgment and memories, so that they could not mistake, John xvi. 13. 'The Spirit of truth—will guide you into all truth.'

(3.) The very words they wrote were from him. Since the apostles spoke the very words of the Holy Ghost, much more did they write them, 1 Cor. ii. 13. And therefore God is said to speak by and in

the holy penmen, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. Luke i. 70. Acts i. 16. He did not give them the matter to put in their own words, but put the words in their hearts too, but in a manner suited to their native style. And truly it is hard to conceive how the inspiration of the holy scriptures could reach the end without it, seeing so much depends on the suitable expressing of matter.

II. I proceed to shew, that the holy scripture is the book of the Lord. This is evident from many things, of which I shall only observe a few.

1. This book discovers what no mortal could ever have done, and nowise could be had but by divine revelation, as the history of the creation, what was done before man was on the earth, the sublime mysteries of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Son of God, and the eternal counsels of God concerning man's salvation.

2. The perfect holiness of the doctrine. It commands all holiness, forbids all impurity in heart and life, under the pain of damnation: which shews it could neither be the work of men, being so far above their reach, and cross to their corrupt nature; nor of evil angels, being so opposite to Satan's kingdom; nor of good ones, who could never have put a cheat on the world, making their own words pass for God's.

3. The efficacy of the doctrine in its searching and convincing the conscience, Heb. iv. 12.; converting souls from their most beloved lusts, even when nothing can be expected from the world for such a change, Psal. xix. 7.; rejoicing the heart under the deepest distresses. ver. 8. This is not from any virtue in the letters or syllables, but from the Spirit, whose instrument it is.

4. The miracles wherewith it has been confirmed. These were wrought to confirm the doctrine, Mat. ix. 6. These are God's seal, which he will never put to a lie.

5. *Lastly*, There is an inward sensation of this in the spirits of those that have their senses exercised. For it is not to be doubted, but as the works of God bear the marks of a divine hand, so his word also does. And while there are such manifest differences betwixt one voice and another of men, how can it be thought, but the voice of God has a peculiar signature on it? If that be not discerned by others, it is by his own people that know his voice.

I shall now make a short improvement of this point.

Use 1. For information. It informs us, that,

1. The scripture is the best of books. They who heard Christ, said, 'Never man spake like this man;' and they that see the true glory of the scriptures must own, never did any write like these writings. There we have the true picture of the great Author, in

spotless holiness; there the revelation of his mind with respect to our salvation. Whatever other books there be in the world relating to our salvation; they are but dim tapers lighted at this burning lamp.

2. They are enemies to God that are enemies to the scriptures, whether in their principles, as Papists and others, or in their practices. For if men loved God, they would love his word, Psal. cxix. 97. And men, by their relish of the word, may know what case their souls are in. For according as they relish the scriptures, so is it with their souls. If they have lost the gust of them, it is evident that either they have no grace, or that it is not in exercise.

3. Wo to those whom the Bible condemns; and these are all wicked men and hypocrites, whatever their stations or professions be. But happy they whom it approves and justifies; and these are all the sincere seekers of God. Seek to be of the number of the latter, and then none of the woes denounced in God's word shall fall upon you.

Use II. Of exhortation.

1. Let us highly prize this book for the sake of the Author. The Ephesians thought that they had good ground to be zealous for the image of Diana, because they fancied it fell down from Jupiter, Acts xix. 35. Your Bible is a book really come from God; let us be ashamed we do not prize it more, by using it diligently to the ends for which it was given the church.

2. Let us believe it in all the parts thereof; the commands, that we may study to conform ourselves to them; the promises, that we may thereby be encouraged to a holy life; and the threatenings, that we may thereby be deterred from sin. Alas! though we own it to be the word of God, that we are no more moved with it than if it were the word of man, and such a man as we give little credit to. For compare the lives of the most part with it they say, it is but idle tales.

3. Let us submit our souls to it, as the oracles of the living God. He is the great Lawgiver, and in that book he speaks: let us own his authority in his word, and submit to it as the rule of our faith and life, without disputing or opposing.

4. *Lastly*, Let us study to be well acquainted with it, and make it our business to search the scriptures. This brings me to the main thing I intend.

Doct. II. "The scripture is a book to be read, carefully and diligently searched, consulted, and sought into."

If ye ask, by whom this is to be done? it is by all into whose hands, by the mercy of God, it comes. Some never had it, and so

they will not be condemned for slighting it, Rom. ii. 12. Magistrates are called to look into it, and be much conversant in it, Josh. i. 8. 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayst observe to do according to all that is written therein.' Deut. xvii. 18, 19. 'And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them.' Ministers are in a special manner called to the study of it, 1 Tim. iv. 13. 'Give attendance to reading.' 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' But not they only are so commanded, but all others within the church, John v. 39. 'Search the scriptures.' Deut. vi. 6, 7. 'These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.'

In discoursing further from this point, I shall,

I. Explain this seeking into the book of the Lord.

II. Give the reasons of the doctrine.

III. Make application.

I. I am to explain this seeking into the book of the Lord. And here I will shew,

1. What is presupposed in this seeking.

2. What is the import of a studious inquiry into the scriptures.

First, I am to shew what is presupposed in this seeking into the book of the Lord. It presupposes,

1. That man has lost his way, and needs direction to find it, Psal. cxix. 176. 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant.' Miserable man is bemisted in a vain world, which is a dark place, and has as much need of the scriptures to direct him, as one has of a light in darkness,' 2 Pet. i. 19. What a miserable case is that part of the world in that want the Bible? They are vain in their imaginations, and grope in the dark, but cannot find the way of salvation. In no better case are those to whom it has not come in power.

2. That man is in hazard of being led farther and farther wrong. This made the spouse say, 'Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon:

for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?' There is a subtle devil, a wicked world, corrupt lusts within one's own breast, to lead him out of the right way, that we had need to give over, and take this guide. There are many false lights in the world, which, if followed, will lead the traveller into a mire, and leave him there.

3. That men are slow of heart to understand the mind of God in his word. It will cost searching diligently ere we can take it up, John v. 39. Our eyes are dim to the things of God, our apprehensions dull, and our judgment is weak. And therefore, because the iron is blunt, we must put too the more strength. We lost the sharpness of our sight in spiritual things in Adam; and our corrupt wills and carnal affections, that savour not the things of God, do more blind our judgments: and therefore it is a labour to us to find out what is necessary for our salvation.

4. That the book of the Lord has its difficulties which are not to be easily solved. Therefore the Psalmist prays, 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law,' Psal. cxix. 18. Philip asked the eunuch, 'Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?' There are depths there wherein an elephant may swim, and will exercise the largest capacities, with all the advantages they may be possessed of. God in his holy providence has so ordered it, to stain the pride of all glory; to make his word the liker himself, whom none can search out to perfection, and to sharpen the diligence of his people in their inquiries into it.

5. That we need highly to understand it, otherwise we would not be bidden search into it. 'Of the times and seasons (says the apostle), ye have no need that I write unto you;' and therefore he wrote not of them. There is a treasure in this field; we are called to dig for it; for tho' it be hid, yet we must have it, or we will pine away in our spiritual poverty.

6. *Lastly*, That we may gain from it by diligent inquiry. The holy humble heart will not be always sent empty away from these wells of salvation, when it plies itself to draw. There are shallow places in these waters of the sanctuary, where lambs may wade.

SECONDLY, I proceed to shew what is the import of a studious inquiry into the scriptures. This holds out the matter and manner of the duty.

First, As for the matter of the duty; it lies in three things.

1. We should be capable to read the scriptures distinctly. Alas! How shall they study the book of God that cannot so much as read it? Isa. xxix. 12. It is sad to think that there are among Chris-

tians who call God their Father, and cannot read his testament; who say they would be at heaven, and yet cannot consult the directions for the way. And if their parents have neglected to teach them, they have not the grace to make up that by their own industry. Their case is little better that cannot read it distinctly; for without that there can be little benefit got by it. Neh. viii. 8.

2. We should acquaint ourselves with the letter of the scriptures, the histories, prophecies, precepts, &c. This Timothy is commended for, 'that from a child he had known the holy scriptures,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. That is the sacred field where the treasure lies; the blessed body, where the soul of the scripture lodgeth; the words wherein the mind of God towards sinners is held forth, Mat. xiii. 52.

3. We ought to labour to understand the mind of God in them, and that savingly and spiritually. Wisdom lies in the book of the Lord; and see what course we should take to get at it, Prov. ii. 4, 5. 'If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures: then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord; and find the knowledge of God.' To read the scriptures just for reading's sake, without labouring to understand what ye read, is very unprofitable work. Nay we should search narrowly till we find the sense and meaning of what we read, as one that digs deep, breaks the clods of earth, till he finds the golden ore.

Secondly, As to the manner of the duty; it imports,

1. A high esteem of the treasure to be found in the book of the Lord, Matth. xiii. 44. People will not be at the pains to seek into what they do not value. If men did not prize gold, they would not rip up the bowels of the earth for it. It is the undervaluing of the scriptures that makes people so little to study and seek into them.

2. A design of spiritual profit by the scripture. No wise man will be at pains but to gain thereby. And he that would aright study the holy scriptures, must design his soul's advantage thereby. We should come to the reading of the book of the Lord, as to a soul-feast, Psal. cxix. 131; as to the gathering of spoil after battle, Psal. cxix. 162. Some read the scriptures to furnish their heads with notions of the things of religion, and their tongues with talk about them; but read ye for holiness to your hearts, and to rule your walk thereby. Some read them to support their errors, and some for matter of jest and drollery; which are horrible work. But 'search ye the scriptures: for in them ye will *find* eternal life; and they are they that testify of Christ,' John v. 39.

3. A serious application of the heart to the work; for it will not be a by-hand work, Psal. i. 2. In the scriptures God speaks to us, as in prayer we speak to God; and when God speaks, we should

listen attentively. The angels pry into scripture-mysteries, 1 Pet. i. 12. So should we into the scriptures, James i. 25.

4. Painfulness in the study. Silver and gold are not to be gathered up by every lazy passenger from the surface of the earth, as stones are, but must with labour be digged out of the bowels of it, Prov. ii. 4. forecited. This is the gate of heaven; and there must be striving to get in at it. It is not easy to overcome a dark, carnal, hard heart, which unfits us for the study of the scriptures. And indeed many get but little advantage by their reading it; for dig they cannot, and beg they will not; and therefore they go empty from these wells of salvation.

5. Diligence and constancy, 1 Pet. i. 10. It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich in all cases, while drousiness cloaths a man with rags. See the duty of a Christian with respect to the word, Psal. i. 2. 'His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' He suffers not his Bible to gather dust.

Lastly, A thorough search. We should go through every leaf of the book of the Lord, and endeavour to acquire the knowledge of the whole scriptures. For 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,' 2 Tim. iii. 16. Some never read all the Bible in their days, but pick out portions here and there only. Searchers do not so, but look into every corner. And we should labour to know more and more of what we have some insight into: for this Bible says one, contains a puncheon that hitherto has not been pierced.

II. The next general head is, to give the reasons of the point, that the book of the Lord should be read, carefully and diligently searched, consulted, and sought into.

1. Because the way of salvation is to be found only therein, John v. 39. forecited. This is the star risen in a dark world, to guide us where Christ is. All the researches of the wise men of the world, all the inventions of men, can never guide us to Immanuel's land, John i. 18. 'No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' Here, and here only, the counsels of God touching man's salvation are discovered. And so, as salvation is the most necessary thing, the study of the scriptures is the most necessary exercise. To slight it, is to judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life.

2. It is the only rule of our faith and lives, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Eph. ii. 20. 'Ye are

built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,' Rev. xxii. 18, 19. 'I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.' The Bible is the pattern shewn on the mount, to which our faith and lives must be conformed, if we would please God. The Lord says to us, as Deut. xxviii. 14. 'Thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left.' None can walk regularly unless they observe the rule; but how can one observe it unless he know it? Matt. xxii. 29. God has given each of us our post in the world: the Bible is the book of our instructions; and shall we not study it? The lawyer studies his law-books, the physician his medical books; and shall not a Christian study the book of the Lord?

3. The Lord himself dictated it, and gave it us for that very end, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. forecited, Rom. v. 4. 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.' And has the Spirit of the Lord written it, and will not we read it? Has he given it us to be studied by us, and will we slight it? This must be horrid contempt of God, and ingratitude to him with a witness. Whose image and superscription is this on the scriptures? Is it not the Lord's? Then take it up and read.

4. We must be judged by the scriptures at the great day, John xii. 48. That is one of the books opened, Rev. xx. 12. This is the book of the Lord's laws and ordinances, by which he will proceed in absolving or condemning us. I own God will go another way to work with those who never had the Bible, Rom. ii. 12. But know thou, that seeing it is in the country where thou livest, though thou never readest a letter of it, thou must be judged by it. Is there not good reason then for reading the scriptures?

III. I proceed now to the practical improvement of this important subject.

Use I. Of information. It lets us see,

1. The necessity and advantage of translations of the scriptures into the vulgar languages, as I have formerly shewn.

2. The people not only may without any licence from the church-guides, but must read the scriptures, for God has commanded it. The Papists here take away the key of knowledge; for their kingdom riseth and standeth by darkness, and ignorance of the scriptures.

3. The scriptures, whatever difficulties be in them, yet are so plain in things necessary to salvation, that even the unlearned may reap advantage by reading them.

USE II. Of exhortation. I exhort one and all of you to the study of the holy scriptures, to *seek out of the book of the Lord, and read.* I will lay this before you in several branches, before I come to the motives.

1. Let such as cannot read, learn to read. Ye that have children, as ye tender their immortal souls, teach them to read the Bible. Remember therefore the vows taken upon you at their baptism, and the duty laid upon you by the Lord himself, Eph. vi. 4. 'Fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. Timothy from a child knew the holy scriptures. Ye who got no learning when ye were young, labour to get it now. Alas! some parents, or others that have had some when young with them, have been cruel to their souls, as the ostrich to her young. They have learned them to work, but have been at no pains to teach them to read; so have sent them out into the world a prey to the devourer's teeth, without the ordinary means of the knowledge of God. Thus they are destroyed with gross ignorance.

But will ye pity your own souls, though others did not that brought you up? And do not enter yourselves heirs to their sin, by being as negligent of yourselves as they were. Though perhaps they left you nothing to live upon, yet for a livlihood ye have done something for your bodies. And will you do nothing for your souls?

Think not it will excuse thee at the hand of God, that thou art a servant; for thy soul is in as great danger as thy master's, and ignorance of religion will destroy it, Is. xxvii. 11. There are few but know how to improve the scarcity of servants to the raising of the fee; but will you improve it by getting it in your condition to learn to read, and seek out such families where you may have that advantage, for some such there are, like Abraham's, Gen. xviii. 10. Nay rather than not do it, give over service for a time, and learn.

Neither will it excuse you that now you have a family; for you have an immortal soul still, which gross ignorance of the mind of God in the scriptures will ruin eternally, 2 Thess. i. 8. And the more need you have to read the scriptures, that you have a family, that you may know the Lord's mind yourself, and teach it your family. Such an excuse will no more screen you from everlasting destruction, than covering yourself with leaves will save you from the flames of a devouring fire.

Say not you are too old now to learn. It is never out of time to

learn to do well for your eternal salvation. If your eyes can serve you to learn, you ought to do it, whatever your age be. But if your sight be so far gone, that you cannot though you were ever so willing; then tremble at the thoughts of the awful judgment of God, that has taken away sight from you, that when you had it would not use it for his glory, and the good of your own soul; and humble thyself, and apply to the blood of Christ, for this thy neglect, lest it prove ruining to thee for ever. And cause others read to you, and beg the teaching of the Spirit, if so be such an old careless slighter of salvation may find mercy.

2. Let such as can read procure Bibles. I dare say one that has a love to the Bible (and that all who love the Lord have) will make many shifts ere they want one. But they must be lawful shifts: for stealing of Bibles, or keeping them up from the owners, is like a thief stealing a rope to hang himself in. But spare it off your bellies or your backs, and procure one rather than want.

3. Let such as have Bibles read them frequently, and acquaint themselves with the book of the Lord. Read them in your families morning and evening; and read them in secret by yourselves; it should be a piece of your duties in secret. Make the Bible your companion abroad and at home, in the house and in the field. It is lamentable to think how unacquainted with the Bible many are, and how little heart they have to it. Ballads and song-books get the place of the Bible with many; and many have no use for it but once in the week, on the sabbath-day, as if it were more for a shew with them than the necessity of their souls.

4. *Lastly*, Not only read it, but search into it, and study it, to know the mind of God therein, and that ye may do it. Be not superficial in your reading of the scriptures, but do it with application, painfulness, and diligence; using all means to read it with understanding; breaking through the surface that ye may come at the hid treasure therein. Reading as well as praying by rote is to little purpose: for a parcel of bare words will neither please God, nor edify your own souls.

I shall now give some motives to enforce this important duty of reading the scriptures.

Mot. 1. God requires it of us, he commands us to do it, John v. 39. 'Search the scriptures.' The Jews had once the scriptures committed to them; but did God design they should only have them in the temple? nay, in their houses also: Only laid up in the ark? nay, he designed another chest for them, even their hearts, Deut. vi. 6, 7. formerly cited. Let the authority of God sway you, then, and as you have any regard to it, study the scriptures.

Mot. 2. Nay, the very being of the Bible among us is enough to move us to study it, seeing it is that by which we must stand or fall for ever. The proclaiming of the law publicly is sufficient to oblige the subjects; and they cannot plead ignorance, though they get not every one a copy of it. *Ignorantia juris excusat neminem;* for every one ought to know the rule of his duty. And sinners will be condemned by it, if they conform not to it, whether they knew it or not, John iii. 19.

Mot. 3. It is an exercise very pleasing to God, so that it be done in a right manner, namely, in faith. For thereby God speaks to us, and we hear and receive his words at his mouth; and obedient ears are his delight.

1. The Spirit of God commends it. It was the commendation of the Bereans, Acts xvii. 11. of Apollos, chap xviii. 24. of Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And why does the Spirit of God commend others for this, but to recommend the scriptures to us?

2. There is a particular blessing annexed to this exercise, Rev. i. 3. 'Blessed is he that readeth.' And the children of God in all ages have sucked the sap of it, while they have had sweet fellowship with God in his word, and the influences of the Spirit, to the quickening, enlightening, fructifying and comforting their souls.

Mot. 4. Consider what a great privilege it is, that we have the scriptures to read and study, at this day. If Christ had not died for our salvation, the world had never been blessed with this glorious light, but had been in darkness here, as a pledge of eternal darkness. Let us compare our case with that of others, and see our privilege.

1. Look back to the case of the church in its first age before the flood, or the time of Moses, while they had not the written word. The will of God was revealed to some of them by visions, voices, dreams, &c.; but we may say, as 2 Pet. i. 19. 'We have a more sure word of prophecy.' But that was not the lot of all, but of a few among them; the rest behoved to learn by tradition. Now every one has alike access to the word of divine revelation.

2. Look to the case of the church under the Old Testament. In David's time there was little more than the five books of Moses written; yet how does that holy soul swell in commendation of his little Bible, when little more than the ground-work of this glorious structure was laid! Psal. cxix. *per tot.* Take that church at her best in this respect, when the canon of the Old Testament was completed, they saw not the light of the New. Now the whole canon of the scripture is in our hands, this glorious image of God has got the finishing stroke; no more is to be added thereto for ever. The New

Testament casts a light upon the types, shadows, and dark prophecies of the Old. And shall we not be sensible of our mercy?

3. But look abroad into the Pagan world at this day, in comparison of which all that know any part of the scriptures are but few, and the Bible is not heard of among them. That precious treasure is not opened to them to this day, and they can know no more of God but what they can learn from the dark glimmerings of nature's light. O may we not in some sort say, as Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.'

4. Look back but a few years hence, when no Bibles were but such as were manuscript, namely, before the art of printing was found out, which was but a little before the reformation from Popery. How rare behoved they then to be! and how dear, ye may easily perceive. But now how common and easy are they to be had?

5. Look to the case of those that lived, or yet live, under Popish tyranny, where it is a crime to have or to read the Bible without a special licence. What a struggle had our reformers in this church, ere they could get allowance by the laws of the land to read the Bible in English? And how is the Bible kept out of the people's hands to this day in Popish countries? Whereas now ye are pressed to read and study it. A New Testament was very precious in those days of Popish persecution, when one gave a cart-load of hay for a leaf of the Bible. But, alas! as one says of the French Protestants, When they burned us for reading the scriptures, we burned in zeal to be reading them; now with our liberty is bred also negligence and disesteem of God's word.

6. *Lastly*, Consider the many helps there are to understand the scriptures beyond what were formerly. Many have run to and fro, and knowledge that way has been increased, both by preaching and writing. And that useful exercise of lecturing, which our church has commanded to be of a large portion of scripture, is no small help. What will we be able to answer to the Lord, if this great privilege be slighted?

Mot. 5. Consider it has been the way of the people of God, to be much addicted to and conversant in the scripture. So true is it that wisdom is justified of her children. O take heed ye go forth by the footsteps of the flock, and ye will not find them in the way of slighting, but prizing the word of God. Consider,

1. Ye shall find the saints highly prizing the word, Psal. xix. & cxix. what large commendations of the word are there! How sweet was it to Jeremiah! chap. xv. 16. 'Thy words were found, and I did

eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' Peter, who heard the voice on the mount, yet prefers the scriptures to voices from heaven, 2 Pet. i. 19. Paul speaks highly of it, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' The martyrs highly prized it, and ventured their lives for it. One cast away at sea, and swimming for his life on a mast, having five pounds, which was all his stock, in the one hand, and a Bible in the other, and being obliged to let go one of them, kept the Bible, and let the five pounds go.

2. Ye shall find them much addicted to the study of the word. It was David's companion and bosom oracle, Psal. cxix. 97. Daniel at Babylon searches the scriptures of the prophets, Dan. ix. 2. So did the noble Bereans, Apollos, and Timothy.

3. Yea, the Spirit of God makes it the character of a godly man, Psal. i. 2. 'His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' O how rational is that! The man that is born of God has a natural desire after the word, as the child after the mother's breast, 1 Pet. ii. 2. The new nature tends to communion with God; it is by the word the soul has communion with him, for thereby God speaks to us. And therefore it is a sad sign, that there are few true Christians, while there are so few that diligently ply the word.

Mot. 6. Consider the excellency of the scriptures. There is a transcendent glory in them, which whoso discerns cannot miss to hug and embrace them. To commend the Bible to you, I shall say these eight things of it.

1. It is the best of books. They may know much, ye think, that have many good books; but have ye the Bible, and ye have the best book in the world. It is the book of the Lord, dictated by unerring infinite wisdom. There is no dross here with the gold, no chaff with the corn. Every word of God is pure. There is nothing for our salvation to be had in other books, but what is learned from this. They are but the rivulets that run from this fountain, and all shine with light borrowed from thence. And it has a blessing annexed to it, a glory and majesty in it, an efficacy with it, that no other book has the like. Therefore Luther professed he would burn his books he had writ, rather than they should divert people from reading the scriptures.

2. It is the greatest and most excellent of the works of God to be seen in the world, Psal. cxxxviii. 2. If the world beautified with sun, moon, and stars, be as a precious ring, the Bible is the diamond in the ring. The sparkling stars, and that glorious globe of light

the sun, yet leave but a dark world, where there is no Bible. Were it put to the choice of the saints, either to put the sun out of the firmament, or the Bible out of the world, they would chuse the former, but never the latter; for that they cannot want till they go there where they shall read all in the face of Jesus. For that must needs be most excellent that has most of God in it.

3. It is the oracles of God, Rom. iii. 2. This was the chief of the Jewish privileges, without which their temple, altar, &c. would have been but dumb signs. The Pagan world did highly reverence and prize the devil's oracles: but we have God's oracles, while we have the scriptures that manifest to us the secrets of heaven. And if we discern aright who speaks in them, we must say, The voice of God, and not of man. Here is what you may consult safely in all your doubts and darknesses; here is what will lead you into all truth.

4. It is the laws of heaven, Psal. xix. 7. The Lord and King of heaven is our great Lawgiver, and the laws are written in this book. It concerns us to study it. Hence we must prove our title to heaven, the blessed inheritance, or we will never obtain it. From thence the sentence of our justification must be drawn, else we are still in a state of wrath. Here is the rule we must follow, that we may please God here; and from this book shall the sentence of our absolution or condemnation be drawn at the great day.

5. It is Christ's testament and latter-will, 1 Cor. xi. 25. Our Lord has died, and he has left us this Bible as his testament; and that makes his children have such an affection to it. Herein he has left them his legacy, not only moveables, but the eternal inheritance; and his last will is now confirmed, that shall stand for ever without alteration. So all the believer's hopes are in this Bible, and this is the security he has for all the privileges he can lay claim to. This is his charter for heaven, the disposition by which he lays claim to the kingdom. And therefore, if ye have any interest in the testament, ye must needs not be slighters of it.

6. It is the sceptre of his kingdom, Psal. cx. 2. and it is a sceptre of righteousness. It is by this word he rules his church, and guides all his children in their way to the land that is far off. Wherever he hath a kingdom, he wields it; and the nations subjecting themselves to him, receive it. And where he rules one's heart, it has place there too, Col. iii. 16. It is a golden sceptre of peace, stretched forth to rebels to win them by offering them peace; to fainting believers, to give them peace. And whosoever will not subject themselves to it, shall be broken with his rod of iron.

7. It is the channel of influences, by which the communications of

grace are made, and the waters of the sanctuary flow into the soul, Isa. lix. *ult.* The apostle appeals for this to the experience of the Galatians, chap iii. 2. 'Received ye the Spirit by the law, or by the hearing of faith?' Is the elect soul regenerated? the word is the incorruptible seed, whereof the new creature is formed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Is faith begotten in the heart? it is by the word, Rom. x. 17. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' Is the new creature to be nourished, strengthened, quickened, actuated, &c.? Christ is the fountain, faith the mouth of the soul, the word the pipes of conveyance, whereat faith must suck, as the child at the nipples.

8. *Lastly*, It is the price of blood even the blood of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 25. Had not the personal Word become flesh, and therein died to purchase redemption for us, we had never seen this written word among us. For it is the book of the covenant which is founded on the blood of the Mediator. It is the grant and conveyance of the right to the favour of God, and all saving benefits to believers; for which there could have been no place had not Christ died. And they that slight it, will be found to tread under foot the blood of the covenant.

Mot. 7. Consider the usefulness of the word. If we consider the Author, we may be sure of the usefulness of the work. The apostle tells us, that it alone is sufficient to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. There is no case a soul can be in, but it is suitable to their case, that desire to make use of it. To commend it to you from its usefulness, I will say these eight things.

1. It is a treasure to the poor, and such are we all by nature, Rev. iii. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 7. Therefore the Lord bids us search the scriptures, in allusion to those that search in mines for silver and gold. If the poor soul search here, receiving the word by faith, he is made up. He shall find there the discharge of his debt, a new right and title to the mortgaged inheritance. This word of the Lord is a treasure,

(1.) For worth. People make not treasures of any but valuable things. There is nothing in the scriptures but what is highly valuable. There are the eternal counsels of God touching our salvation; life and immortality brought to light; there are the purest percepts, the most awful threatenings, and the most precious promises, 2 Pet. i. 4, &c.

(2.) For variety. In the scriptures shines the manifold wisdom of God. They that nauseate this book of the Lord, because they find not new things in it after some time perusing it, discover their

senses not to be exercised to discern. For should we come to it ever so often, bringing fresh affections with us, we would find fresh entertainment there; as is evident by the glorious refreshment sometimes found in a word, that has been often gone over before without any thing remarkable. And truly the saints shall never exhaust it while here; but as new discoveries are made in it in several ages, so it will be to the end.

(3.) For abundance. There is in it not only for the present, but for the time to come, Isa. xlii. 23. There is abundance of light, instruction, comfort, &c. and what is needful for the saints travelling heavenward, Psal. cxix. 162. And indeed it is the spoil to be gathered by us. Our Lord having fought the battle against death and devils, here the spoil lies to be gathered by us that remained at home when the fight was.

(4.) *Lastly*, For closeness. This word contains the wisdom of God in a mystery. It is a hid book to most of the world, and indeed a sealed book to those that remain in their natural blindness. Nor can we get into the treasure without the illumination of the same Spirit which dictated it, 1 Cor. ii. 10. There is a path here which the vulture's eye hath not seen, which the carnal eye cannot take up, ver. 14. Therefore have we need to seek diligently, and pray, as Psal. cxix. 18. 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law.'

2. It is life to the dead: 'The words that I speak unto you (says Christ), they are spirit, and they are life,' John vi. 63. We are naturally dead in sins; but the word is the means of spiritual life. It is the ordinary means of conversion, Psal. xix. 7. 'The law of the Lord—converteth the soul;' and of regeneration, 1 Pet. i. 23. 'Being born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God.' By it the soul is persuaded into the covenant, and brought to embrace Jesus Christ. For thereby the Spirit is communicated to the elect of God. Thus it is of use to bring sinners home to God, from under the power of darkness to the kingdom of his dear Son.

3. It is light to the blind, Psal. xix. 8. 'The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' It is a convincing light, to discover one's state to him, and so to rouse up the soul from its natural security. It pierces the heart as an arrow, and makes the careless sinner stand and consider his way: for it freely tells every one his faults, Jam. i. 25. And while the child of God travels through a dark world, it serves to light him the way, 2 Pet. i. 19.—'a light shining in a dark place;' and lets him see how to set down every step. Hence David says, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,' Psal. cxix. 105.

4. It is awakening to those that are asleep, Cant. vii. 9. It is the voice of God which is full of majesty, to awaken the sleepy Christian to the exercise of grace. For as it is the means of begetting grace in the heart, so it is also the means of actuating and quickening thereof, Psal. cxix. 50. 'Thy word hath quickened me.' Here the Christian may hear the alarm sound to rise up and be doing. Here are the precious promises as cords of love to draw, and the awful threatenings to set idlers to work.

5. It is a sword to the Christian soldier, Eph. vi. 17. 'The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' Whoever has a mind for heaven must fight his way to it: for none get the crown but the conquerors, Rev. iii. 21. They must go through many temptations, from the devil, the world, and the flesh; and the word is the sword for resisting them. It is an offensive and defensive weapon. We see how our Lord Jesus wielded it, Mat. iv. 4, 7. 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.—It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' And whatever be our temptations, if we be well versed in the word, we may from thence bring answers to them all.

6. It is a counsellor to those who are in straits, doubts, and difficulties, Psal. cxix. 24. 'Thy testimonies are—my counsellors.' Many a time the children of God, when tossed with doubts and fears, have found a quiet harbour there; and have got their way cleared to them there, when they knew not what to do. And no doubt, if we were more exercised unto godliness, and looking to the Lord in our straits, we would make more use of the Bible, as the oracles of Heaven.

7. It is a comforter to those that are cast down, Psal. cxix. 49, 50. 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.' The way to heaven lies through many tribulations, and afflictions are the trodden path to glory. But the Lord has left his people the Bible as a cordial to support them under all their pressures from within and without. And indeed the sap of the word, and the sweetness of the promises, are never more lively relished, than when the people of God are exercised under afflictions. Then does that heavenly fountain flow most plentifully, when, created streams being dried up, the soul goes for all to the Lord. To sum up all in one word,

8. *Lastly*, It is a cure for all diseases of the soul, Prov. iv. 22. 'My words are—health to all their flesh.' There is no malady that a soul is under, but there is a suitable remedy for it in the word, 2

Tim. iii. 16, 17. frequently quoted above, being adapted by infinite wisdom to the case of poor sinners. By it the simple may be made wise, the weak strengthened, the staggering confirmed, the hard heart melted, the shut heart opened, &c. it being the means the Spirit makes use of for these and all other such purposes.

Mot. 8. Consider the honourable epithets given to the scriptures. Amongst which I name only three.

1. The scriptures of truth, Dan. x. 21. Men may wrest the scriptures to patronise their errors, but the whole word of God is most pure truth. Here are no mistakes, no weaknesses, that adhere to all human composures. Here we may receive all that is taught us without hesitation. The hearers of men, or readers of their works, are divided into four sorts: Some like spunges, that suck up all, both good and bad: Some like sand glasses, who, what they receive at the one ear let go at the other: Some like a strainer, that lets all the good pass through, but keeps the dregs: Some like the sieve, that keeps the good grain, and lets through what is not worth. These last are only to be approved; but in the reading of the word we must be as the first sort.

2. Holy scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15. They are the word of a holy God, from whom nothing can come but what is holy. It consists of holy commands, holy promises, holy threatenings, instructions, directions, &c. And holy hearts will love and reverence them for that very reason.

3. *Lastly*, The book of the Lord. What can be said more to commend it to us, if we have any regard to the Lord himself? If I could tell you of a book that fell down from heaven, and were to be had by any means, who would not be curious to have such a book and study it? This is the book that contains the counsels of Heaven, and is given from Heaven to the church, to let men see the way to it.

Mot. last. Consider the danger of slighting the word. It exposes to sin, and consequently to the greatest danger. How can they keep the way of the word that do not study to acquaint themselves with it? They must needs walk in darkness that do not make use of the light; and this leads to everlasting darkness, John iii. 19. If by this word we must be judged, how can they think to stand that neglect it?

I conclude with some directions for the study of the scriptures.

1. Keep an ordinary in reading them, that ye may be acquainted with the whole; and make this reading a part of your secret duties. Not that ye should bind up yourselves to an ordinary, so as never to read by choice, but that ordinarily this tends

most to edification. Some places are more difficult, some may seem very bare for an ordinary reader; but if you would look on it all as God's word, not to be slighted, and read it with faith and reverence, no doubt ye would find advantage.

2. Set a special mark, one way or other, on those passages you read, which you find most suitable to your case, condition, or temptations; or such as ye have found to move your hearts more than other passages. And it will be profitable often to review these.

3. Compare one scripture with another, the more obscure with what which is more plain, 2 Pet. i. 20. This is an excellent means to find out the sense of the scriptures; and to this good use serve the marginal notes on Bibles. And keep Christ in your eye, for to him the scriptures of the Old Testament (in its genealogies, types, and sacrifices) look, as well as those of the New.

4. Read with a holy attention, arising from the consideration of the majesty of God, and the reverence due to him. This must be done with attention, (1.) To the words; (2.) To the sense: and (3.) To the divine authority of the scripture, and the bond it lays on the conscience for obedience, 1 Thess. ii. 13.

5. Let your main end in reading the scriptures be practice, and not bare knowledge, Jam. i. 22. Read that you may learn and do, and that without any limitation or distinction, but that whatever you see God requires, you may study to practise.

6. Beg of God and look to him for his Spirit. For it is the Spirit that dictated it, that it must be savingly understood, 1 Cor. ii. 11. And therefore before you read, it is highly reasonable you beg a blessing on what you are to read.

7. Beware of a worldly fleshly mind: for fleshly sins blind the mind from the things of God; and the worldly heart cannot favour them. In an eclipse of the moon the earth comes between the sun and the moon, and so keeps the light of the sun from it. So the world, in the heart, coming betwixt you and the light of the word, keeps its divine light from you.

8. Labour to be exercised unto godliness, and to observe your case. For an exercised frame helps mightily to understand the scriptures. Such a Christian will find his case in the word, and the word will give light to his case, and his case light into the word.

9. *Lastly*, Whatever you learn from the word, labour to put it in practice. For to him that hath shall be given. No wonder they get little insight into the Bible, who make no conscience of practising what they know. But while the stream runs into a holy life, the fountain will be the more free.

OF GOD AND HIS PERFECTIONS.

JOHN iv. 24.—*God is a Spirit.*

SIMONIDES, a heathen poet, being asked by Hiero king of Syracuse, *What is God?* desired a day to think upon it; and when that day was at an end, he desired two days; and when these were past, he desired four days. Thus he continued to double the number of days in which he desired to think of God, ere he would give an answer. Upon which the king expressing his surprise at his behaviour, asked him, What he meant by this? To which the poet answered, 'The more I think of God, he is still the more dark and unknown to me.' Indeed no wonder that he made such an answer; for he that would tell what God is in a measure suitable to his excellency and glory, had need to know God even as he is known of him, which is not competent to any man upon earth. Agur puzzles the whole creation with that sublime question, *What is his name?* PROV. XXX. 4. But though it is impossible in our present state to know God perfectly, seeing he is incomprehensible; yet so much of him is revealed in the scriptures as is necessary for us to know in order to our salvation.

The text tells us, and it should be remembered, that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and who only can reveal him, is here the speaker, that *God is a Spirit.* It is but little of the nature of spirits that we, who dwell in tabernacles of clay, are so intimately connected with flesh and blood, and so naturally impressed with sensible objects, can know. We cannot fully understand what our own spirits or souls are; and less do we know of the nature of angels, who are of a superior nature to us; and far less can we know of the spiritual nature of the Divine Being, which is utterly incomprehensible by men or angels. However, as all our ideas begin at what is infinite, in considering the nature of spirits, so we are led to conceive of God as infinitely more perfect than any finite spirit*. All we can know of spirits is,

* It will not be improper here to subjoin the following observation of the celebrated Mr. Addison. 'If we consider the idea which wise men, by the light of reason, have framed of the Divine Being, it amounts to this, That he has in him all the perfections of a spiritual nature; and since we have no notion of any kind of spiritual perfection but what we discover in our own souls, we join infinitude to each kind of these perfections, and what is a faculty in a human soul becomes an attribute in God. *We* exist in place and time, the Divine Being fills the immensity of space with his presence, and inhabits eternity. *We* are possessed with a little power and a little know-

1. That a spirit is the most perfect and excellent of beings, more excellent than the body, or any thing that is purely material.

2. That a spirit is in its own nature immortal, having nothing in its frame and constitution tending to dissolution or corruption.

3. That a spirit is capable of understanding, willing, and putting forth actions agreeable to its nature, which no other being can do.

Now these conceptions of the nature of spirits lead us to conceive of God,

1. As a being that is more perfect and excellent than all other spirits and beings. Hence he is said to be *incorruptible*, Rom. i. 23.; *immortal* and *invisible*, 1 Tim. i. 17. He has understanding and will; and so we conceive of him as the creator and governor of all things; which he could not be, if he were not an intelligent and sovereign spirit.

2. Though angels and the souls of men are spirits, yet their excellency is only comparative, that is, they excel the best of all material beings in their nature and properties. But God, as a spirit, is infinitely more excellent than all material beings, and all created spirits. Their perfections are derived from him; and therefore he is called 'the Father of spirits,' Heb. xii. 9. and 'the God of the spirits of all flesh,' Numb. xvi. 22.; and his perfections are underived; and he is independently immortal. Hence it is said of him, that 'he only hath immortality,' 1 Tim. vi. 16. He is an infinite spirit; and it can be said of none but him, that 'his understanding is infinite,' Psal. cxlvii. 5.

Now, a spirit is an immaterial substance, Luke xxiv. 39.; and seeing whatever God is, he is infinitely perfect in it, he is a most pure spirit. Hence we may infer,

1. That God has no body nor bodily parts. *Object.* How then are eyes, ears, hands, face, and the like, attributed in scripture to God? *Answ.* They are attributed to him not properly, but figuratively; they are spoken of him after the manner of men, in condescension to our weakness; but we are to understand them after a sort becoming the Divine Majesty. We are to consider what such bodily parts serve us for, as our eyes for discerning and knowing, our arms for strength, our hands for action, &c. and we are to conceive these things to be in God infinitely, which these parts serve for in us. Thus, when eyes and ears are ascribed to God they signify his omniscience; his hands denote his power, and his face the manifestation of his love and favour.

ledge, the Divine Being is almighty and omniscient. In short, by adding infinity to any kind of perfection we enjoy, and by joining all these different kinds of perfections in one being, we form our idea of the great Sovereign of nature.'

2. That God is invisible, and cannot be seen with the eyes of the body, no not in heaven; for the glorified body is still a body, and God a spirit, which is no object of the eyes, more than sound, taste, smell, &c. 1 Tim. i. 17.

3. That God is the most suitable good to the nature of our souls, which are spirits; and can communicate himself, and apply those things to them, which only can render them happy, as he is the God and Father of our spirits.

4. That it is sinful and dishonourable to God, either to make images or pictures of him without us, or to have any image of him in our minds, which our unruly imagination is apt to frame to itself, especially in prayer. For God is the object of our understanding, not of our imagination. God expressly prohibited Israel to frame any similitude or resemblance of him, and tells them, that they had not the least pretence for so doing, inasmuch as they 'saw no similitude of him, when he spake to them in Horeb,' Deut. iv. 12, 15, 16. And says the prophet, 'To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?' Isa. xl. 18. We cannot form an imaginary idea of our own souls or spirits, which are absolutely invisible to us, and far less of him who is the invisible God, whom no man hath seen or can see. Therefore to frame a picture or an idea of what is invisible, is highly absurd and impracticable: nay, it is gross idolatry, prohibited in the second commandment.

5. That externals in worship are of little value with God, who is a spirit, and requires the heart. They who would be accepted of God must worship him in spirit and in truth, that is, from an apprehension and saving knowledge of what he is in Christ to poor sinners. And this saving knowledge of God in Christ is attainable in this life: for it is the matter of the divine promise, 'I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord,' Jer. xxiv. 7. 'It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God, John vi. 45. And therefore it should be most earnestly and assiduously sought after by us, as, unless we attain to it, we must perish for ever.

That we may know what sort of a spirit God is, we must consider his attributes, which we gather from his word and works, and that two ways: 1. By denying of, and removing from God, in our minds, all imperfection which is in the creatures, Acts xvii. 29. And thus we come to the knowledge of his incommunicable attributes, so called because there is no shadow or vestige of them in the creatures, such as infinity, eternity, unchangeableness. 2. By attributing unto him, by way of eminency, whatever is excellent in the creatures, seeing he is the fountain of all perfection in them,

Psal. xciv. 9. And thus we have his communicable attributes, whereof there are some vestiges and small scantlings in the creature, as being, wisdom, power, &c. amongst which his spirituality is to be reckoned.

Now, both these sorts of attributes in God are not qualities in him distinct from himself, but they are God himself. God's infinity is God himself, his wisdom is himself; he is wisdom, goodness, 1 John i. 5. Neither are these attributes so many different things in God; but they are each of them God himself: for God swears by himself, Heb. vi. 13.; yet he swears by his holiness, Amos iv. 2. He creates by himself, Isa. xliv. 24.; yet he creates by his power, Rom. i. 20. Therefore God's attributes are God himself. Neither are these attributes separable from one another; for though we, through weakness, must think and speak of them separately, yet they are truly but the one infinite perfection of the divine nature, which cannot be separated therefrom, without denying that he is an infinitely perfect being.

We have said that God is a spirit; but angels and the souls of men are spirits too. What then is the difference between them? Why, God is an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable spirit; but angels and souls are but finite, were not from eternity, and are changeable spirits. Now, these three, infinity, eternity, and immutability, are God's incommunicable attributes, which we are next to explain.

First, God is infinite. Infinity is the having no bounds or limits within which a thing is contained. God then is infinite, *i. e.* he is whatsoever he is without bounds, limits, or measure, Job xi. 7. 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' We cannot define the presence of God by any certain place, so as to say, Here he is, but not there; nor by any limits, so as to say, Thus far his being reacheth, and no further: but he is every where present, after a most inconceivable manner, even in the deepest darkness, and the closest recesses of privacy. He fills all the innumerable spaces that we can imagine beyond this visible world, and infinitely more than we can imagine.

Now God is infinite, (1.) In respect of his being: for of his nature our finite understandings cannot possibly form any adequate conception. This lies hid in rays of such bright and radiant glory, as must for ever dazzle the eyes of those who attempt to look into it. (2.) In respect of place; and therefore he is every where present: 'Can any man hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord,' Jer. xxiii. 24. (3.) In respect of time and duration: for the

ages of his eternity cannot be numbered, 'nor the number of his years searched out,' Job xxxvi. 26. (4.) In respect of all his communicable attributes. Thus the depth of his wisdom cannot be fathomed: 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Rom. xi. 33. 'His greatness is unsearchable,' Psal. cxlv. 3. The extent of his power cannot be reached: 'The thunder of his power who can understand?' Job xxvi. 14. We cannot understand his powerful thunder, one of the lowest displays of his majesty in our region, much less the utmost extent and force of his power, in its terrible effects, especially the power of his anger: 'God is great, and we know him not.' The treasures of the divine goodness cannot be inventoried: 'O how great is thy goodness (says the Psalmist), which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! The brightness of God's glory cannot be described; as a full discovery of it would quite overpower the faculties of any mortal in this imperfect state: for man is weak and unworthy of it, weak and could not bear it, guilty and could not but dread it: and therefore God 'holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth a cloud upon it, Job xxvi. 9. With what propriety, then did he say to Moses, 'Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live!' Exod. xxxiii. 20.

That God is infinite, is evident from the natural notions and dictates of the human mind. Hence the heathens, by the light of nature, attributed this perfection to the Divine Being. Thus one philosopher pronounced him to be a circle whose centre is every where, and whose circumference is no where; which another philosopher thus expressed in clearer terms, God is included in no place, and excluded from none. Which way soever ye turn, says Seneca, ye may take notice of God meeting you; for nothing is void of him: he himself fills all his works, and is present with the whole creation. Remarkable also is the expression of the prince of Latin poets, *Jovis omnia plena*, 'All things are full of God.' This also appears from several passages of scripture; as Deut. iv. 39. 'The Lord is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath.' 1 Kings viii. 27. 'The heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee,' says Solomon in his prayer to God at the dedication of the temple. See also Psal. cxxxix. 4, &c. Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. Again, if God were not infinite and immense, many gross absurdities would follow from the contrary notion; such as, it is inconsistent with his universal providence over the world, by which all things are preserved. 'In him we live, move and have our being,' Acts xvii. 27. As his

providence is over all, his essence must be equally diffusive. It is inconsistent with his supreme perfection. No perfection can be wanting in God: and therefore a limited essence, which is an imperfection, cannot be attributed to him. It is also inconsistent with his immutability: For if he move and recede from one place to another, would he not thereby be mutable? while yet 'with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' Last of all, it would be inconsistent with his omnipotence. That God can do every thing, is a notion settled in the minds of all; and his essence cannot be less or more confined than his power, and his power cannot be thought to extend farther than his essence.

But some may be ready to say, Does not the scripture say, that God sits in heaven and dwells on high, that heaven is his throne; and does not the Lord's prayer teach us to say, *Our Father which art in heaven?* Now, how can this agree with his infinity or immensity? I answer, God is indeed said to sit in heaven and to dwell on high; but he is no where said to dwell only in the heavens. It is the court of his majestic presence, not the prison of his essence. There is a three-fold presence of God: A glorious presence, which is peculiar to heaven: A gracious presence, which the saints enjoy on earth: And an essential presence, which is equally and alike in all places. Others may allege, that it is a disparagement to God, to say that he is essentially present in all places and with all creatures, even on the dunghill of the earth, and in the sordid sink of hell with the devils and the damned. To this I would only say, that it is a gross misapprehension of God, and an unaccountable measuring of him by ourselves, to imagine that he is capable of being infected by any thing below. For he is a pure and spotless being. Whatever is nauseous to our senses cannot affect him. Darkness is uncomfortable to us: but the darkness and the light are all one to him. Wickedness may hurt a man; but if we multiply our transgressions, what can we do unto him? Job xxxv. 6, 8. To deny the immensity of God, says one, because of ill-scented places, is to measure God rather by the nicety of sense, than by the sagacity of reason.

Secondly, The next incommunicable attribute of God is eternity. Hence he is called 'the King eternal.' 1 Tim. i. 17. We find other things called eternal. But the eternity of all things besides God is only their having no end, though they had a beginning. Thus angels and the souls of men are eternal, because they shall never have an end. The covenant of grace is eternal, because the mercies of it shall last for ever. The gospel is eternal, because the effects of it shall never wear away. The redemption by Christ is

eternal, for the same reason. And the last judgment is so, because the consequences will be everlasting. But the eternity of God is his being without beginning and without end, Psal. xc. 2. 'From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.' He was from everlasting before time, and will remain unto everlasting when time shall be no more; without beginning of life or end of days.

Thirdly, The next incommunicable attribute of God is unchangeableness. God is immutable, that is, always the same, without any alteration. Hence it is said, Jam. i. 17. 'With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' Mal. iii. 6. 'I am the Lord, I change not.' God makes changes upon the creatures, but is liable to no change himself.' Though he alters his dispensations, yet not his nature; but, by one pure and constant act of his will and power, effects what changes he pleases. He is the same in all his perfections, constant to his intentions, steady to his purpose, unchangeably fixed and persevering in all his decrees and resolutions. When God is said to repent in scripture, Gen. vi. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 11. it denotes only a change of his outward conduct according to his infallible foresight and immutable will. He changes the way of his providential dealings according to the carriage and deportment of his creature, without changing his will, which is the rule of his providence. For otherwise that is an eternal truth, Num. xxiii. 19. 'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent,' 1 Sam. xv. 29. 'The Strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent.'

Having taken a short view of the incommunicable attributes of God, I proceed now to consider those that are called communicable, viz. his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Now these things are in the creatures indeed, but they are in them in a finite way; but God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in these perfections, which no creature is or can be.

First, There is his being which is his nature or essence and existence, which are but one thing in God. Creatures indeed have a being, but it is only a finite being, a being that has a beginning, a changeable one, and that may have an end. But God's being is an infinite being, eternal and unchangeable. Hence he calls himself, Exod. iii. 14. I AM THAT I AM. Hence we may infer,

1. That God is incomprehensible, and his essence infinite and unbounded, Psal. cxlv. 3. 'His greatness is unsearchable.' It is not possible for a finite understanding to comprehend all that is in God; but the nature of God is a boundless ocean that hath no shore, Job xi. 7. 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?' And though God perfectly knows himself, that is because his understanding is infinite.

2. God is omnipresent and immense. He is present every where, but bounded no where, not only in respect of his virtue or influence, but of his essence. This clearly appears from the following passages, Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10. 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there: If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.' Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. 'Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord,: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord, 1 Kings viii. 27. 'Behold the heaven and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee.' He is there where the thief is stealing, the unclean person gratifying his base lusts, &c. though they see him not, and think themselves secure when no other eyes see them.

3. There is no succession in the duration of God; for where there is not a first, there cannot be a second moment of duration; but God is eternal: And there can be no succession of time in God's duration, if he be unchangeable; for that is a continual change. See 2 Pet. iii. 8. 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'

4. God is independent, or self-sufficient. His being and perfections are underived, and not communicated to him, as all finite perfections are by him to the creature. This self-existence, or independence, is one of the highest glories of the divine nature, by which he is distinguished from all creatures, who live, move, and have their being in and from him. Therefore all our springs are in him, all that we enjoy or hope for is from him; and we should be entirely devoted to his service and honour.

5. *Lastly*, This doctrine affords full breasts of consolation to the godly, who have an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable friend, who will never leave nor forsake them, but render them completely blessed at last, and confirm them in that happy state for ever. And here is unspeakable terror to those whose enemy this great and eternal God is; for being his enemies, and dying in their rebellion, they shall suffer the whole vengeance and wrath threatened in his word, which he liveth for ever to inflict; and he will never alter what he hath threatened. O let sinners be now persuaded to make this infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God, their friend through Jesus Christ, and so they shall infallibly escape the wrath that is to come.

Secondly, The next communicable attribute of God is wisdom.

The personal wisdom of God is Christ, 1 Cor. i. 24. But this is his essential wisdom, which is that attribute of God whereby he knows himself, and all possible things, and how to dispose all things to the best ends. Hence he is said to 'know all things,' John xxi. 17. and to be 'God only wise,' Rom. xvi. 27. Now, God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his wisdom, Psal. cxlvii. 5. 'His understanding is unsearchable.'

The wisdom of God appears,

1. In the works of creation. The universe is a bright mirror wherein the wisdom of God may be clearly seen. 'The Lord by wisdom made the heavens,' Psal. cxxxvi. 5. 'The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens,' Prov. iii. 19. 'He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.' More particularly, the wisdom of God appears, (1.) In the vast variety of creatures which he hath made. Hence the Psalmist cries out, 'How manifold are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all,' Psal. civ. 24. (2.) In the admirable and beautiful order and situation of the creatures. God hath marshalled every thing in its proper place and sphere. For instance, the sun, by its position displays the infinite wisdom of its Creator. It is placed in the midst of the planets, to enlighten them with its brightness, and inflame them with its heat, and thereby derive to them such benign qualities as make them beneficial to all mixed bodies. If it were raised as high as the stars, the earth would lose its prolific virtue, and remain a dead carcase for want of its quickening heat; and if it were placed as low as the moon, the air would be inflamed with its excessive heat, the waters would be dried up, and every planet scorched. But at the due distance at which it is placed, it purifies the air, abates the superfluities of the waters, temperately warms the earth, and so serves all the purposes of life and vegetation. It could not be in another position without the disorder and hurt of universal nature. Again, the expansion of the air from the ethereal heavens to the earth is another testimony of divine wisdom: for it is transparent and of a subtile nature, and so a fit medium to convey light and celestial influences to this lower world. Moreover, the situation of the earth doth also trumpet forth the infinite wisdom of its Divine Maker: for it is as it were the pavement of the world, and placed lowermost, as being the heaviest body, and fit to receive the weightiest matter. (3.) In fitting every thing for its proper end and use, so that nothing is unprofitable and useless. After the most diligent and accurate inquiry into the works of God, there is nothing to be found superfluous, and there is nothing defective. (4.) In the sub-

ordination of all its parts, to one common end. Though they are of different natures, as lines vastly distant in themselves, yet they all meet in one common centre, namely, the good and preservation of the whole, Hos. ii. 21, 22. 'I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.'

2. In the government of the world. God sits in his secret place, surrounded with clouds and darkness, holding the rudder of the world in his hand, and steering its course through all the floatings and tossings of casualty and contingency to his own appointed ends. There he grasps and turns the great engine of nature, fastening one pin and loosing another, moving and removing the several wheels of it, and framing the whole according to the eternal idea of his own understanding. By his governing providence he directs all the actions of his creatures; and, by the secret and efficacious penetration of the divine influence, he powerfully sways and determines them which way he pleases.

3. In the work of redemption. This is the very masterpiece of Divine wisdom; and here shines the manifold or diversified wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10. It appears, (1.) In the contrivance thereof. When man had ruined himself by sin, all the wisdom of men and angels could never have devised a method for his recovery. Heaven seemed to be divided upon this awful event. Mercy inclined to save man, but Justice interposed for satisfaction. Justice pleaded the law and the curse, by which the souls of sinners are forfeited to vengeance. Mercy, on the other hand, urged, Shall the Almighty build a glorious work, and suffer it to lie in eternal ruins? shall the most excellent creature in the inferior world perish through the subtilty of a malicious and rebellious spirit? shall that arch-rebel triumph for ever, and raise his trophies from the final ruin of the works of the Most High? Shall the reasonable creature lose the fruition of God, and God lose the subjection and service of his creature? and, shall all mankind be made in vain? Mercy further pleaded, That if the rigorous demands of Justice be heard, it must lie an obscure and unregarded attribute in the divine essence for ever; that it alone must be excluded, while all the rest of the attributes had their share of honour. Thus the case was infinitely difficult, and not to be unravelled by the united wit of all the celestial spirits. A bench of angels was incapable to contrive a method of reconciling infinite mercy with inflexible justice, of satisfying the demands of the one, and granting the requests of the other. In this hard exigence the wisdom of God interposed, and in the vast treasure of its incomprehensible light, found out an admirable expedient to save

man without prejudice to the other divine perfections. The pleas of Justice, said the wisdom of God, shall be satisfied in punishing, and the requests of Mercy shall be granted in pardoning. Justice shall not complain for want of punishment, nor Mercy for want of compassion; I will have an infinite sacrifice to content Justice, and the virtue and fruit of that sacrifice shall delight mercy. Here justice shall have punishment to accept, and Mercy shall have pardon to bestow. My Son shall die, and satisfy justice by his death; and by the virtue and merit of that sacrifice sinners shall be received into favour, and herein Mercy shall triumph and be glorified. Here was the most glorious display of wisdom. (2.) In the ordination of a Mediator every way fitly qualified to reconcile men unto God. A mediator must be capable of the sentiments and affections of both the parties he is to reconcile, and a just esteemer of the rights and injuries of the one and the other, and have a common interest in both. The Son of God, by his incarnation, perfectly possesses all these qualities. He hath a nature to please God, and a nature to please sinners. He had both the perfections of the Deity, and all the qualities and sinless infirmities of the humanity. The one fitted him for things pertaining to God, and the other furnished him with a sense of the infirmities of man.—This union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ was necessary to fit and qualify him for the discharge of his threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King.—As a Prophet, it was requisite he should be God, that so he might acquaint us with his Father's will, and reveal the secret purposes and hidden counsels of heaven concerning our salvation, which were locked up in the bosom of God from all eternity. And it was needful he should be man, that he might converse with poor sinners in a familiar manner, and convey the mind and counsels of God to them, in such a way as they could receive them.—As a Priest, he behoved to be a man, that so he might be capable to suffer, and to bear the wrath which the sins of the elect had justly deserved. And it behoved him to be God, to render his temporary sufferings satisfactory. The great dignity and excellency of the divine Mediator's person made his sufferings of infinite value in God's account. Though he only suffered as a man, yet he satisfied as God.—As a King, he must be God, to conquer Satan, convert an elect world, and effectually subdue the lusts and corruptions of men. And he must be man, that by the excellency of his example, he might lead us in the way of life. (3.) In the manner whereby this redemption is accomplished, namely, by the humiliation of the Son of God. By this he counteracted the sin of angels and men. Pride is the poison of every sin: for in every transgression the creature prefers his

pleasure to and sets up his own will above God's. This was the special sin of Adam. The devil would have levelled heaven by usurpation. He said in his heart, *I will be like the Most High;* and man infected with his breath (when he said, *Ye shall be like gods)* became sick of the same disease. Now, the Divine Redeemer, that he might cure our disease in its source and cause by the quality of the remedy, applied to our pride an unspeakable humility. Man was guilty of the highest robbery in affecting to be equal with God; and the Son, who was in the bosom of God, and equal to him in majesty and authority, emptied himself by assuming the human nature in its servile state, Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. It is said, John i. 14. 'The word was made flesh.' The meanest part of our nature is specified to signify the greatness of his abasement. There is such an infinite distance between God and flesh, that the condescension is as admirable as the contrivance. So great was the malignity of human pride, that such a profound humility was requisite for the cure of it. And by this Christ destroyed the works of the devil. (4.) In appointing such contemptible, and in appearance opposite means, to bring about such glorious effects. The way is as admirable as the work. Christ ruined the devil's empire by the very same nature that he had vanquished, and by the very means which he had made use of to establish and confirm it. He took not upon him the nature of angels, which is equal to Satan in strength and power; but he took part of flesh and blood, that he might the more signally triumph over that proud spirit in the human nature, which was inferior to his, and had been vanquished by him in paradise. For this end he did not immediately exercise omnipotent power to destroy him, but managed our weakness to foil the roaring lion. He did not enter the lists with Satan in the glory of his Deity, but disguised under the human nature which was subject to mortality. And thus the devil was overcome in the same nature over which he first got the victory. For as the whole race of mankind was captivated by him in Adam the representative, so believers are made victorious over him by the conquest which their representative obtained in the whole course of his sufferings. As our ruin was effected by the subtility of Satan, so our recovery is wrought by the wisdom of God, who takes the wise in their own craftiness. Thus eternal life springs from death, glory from ignominy, and blessedness from a curse. We are healed by stripes, quickened by death, purchased by blood, crowned by a cross, advanced to the highest honour by the lowest humility, comforted by sorrows, glorified by disgrace, absolved by condemnation, and made rich by poverty. Thus the wisdom of God shines with a radiant brightness in the work of redemption.

I shall conclude this point with a few inferences.

1. God is omniscient; 'he knows all things,' John xxi. 17. 'All things are naked and open to him,' Heb. iv. 13. His eye sees us wherever we are. Even future contingencies, as well as the most necessary things are known to him. This is beautifully described by the Psalmist, Psal. cxxxix. 1,—10. which deserves your serious perusal.

2. His knowledge of all things is not conjectural, but infallible, Rom. xi. 33, 34. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, who hath been his counsellor?' There is nothing to him contingent or uncertain; but every thing falls out exactly according to his foreknowledge and predetermination.

3. It is altogether independent on the creature, whose motions and operations were known to him from eternity, and are all regulated by his counsel.

4. *Lastly*, To this wise God we may safely entrust all our concerns, knowing he will manage them all so as to promote his own glory and our real good.

Thirdly, The next communicable perfection of God is power, whereby he can do whatever he pleases, and whatsoever is not repugnant to his nature, Jer. xxxii. 17. 'Ah, Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth, by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.' He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in power; which the scripture holds forth, 1. Positively, Gen. xvii. 1. 'I am the Almighty God.' 2. Negatively, Luke i. 37. 'With God nothing shall be impossible.' 3. Comparatively, Matt. xix. 26. 'With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.'

The power of God appears,

1. In the creation of the world, Rom. i. 20. 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.' O how great must that power be, which produced the beautiful fabric of the universe, without the concurrence of any material cause! This proclaims it to be truly infinite: for nothing less could make such distant extremes as nothing and being to meet together. All this was done by a word, one simple act of his will; for 'he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast,' Psal. xxxiii. 9.

2. In the preservation of the world, and all things therein. He 'upholdeth all things by the word of his power,' Heb. i. 3. He preserves all the creatures in their proper place, for their proper use

and end. It is by the Divine Power that the heavenly bodies have constantly rolled about in their spheres for so many ages, without wearing or moving out of their proper course; and that the tumultuous elements have persisted in their order to this very day. He preserves the confederacies of nature, sets bounds to the raging sea, and keeps it within its limits by a girdle of sand. He is the powerful preserver of man and beast. He preserves them in their kind and species, by the constant succession of them one after another; so that, though the individuals perish, yet the species continues. O what a mighty power must that be that sustains so many creatures, sets bounds to the raging sea, holds the wind in his fists, and preserves a comely order and sweet harmony among all the creatures!

3. In the government of the world. He is the supreme Rector of the universe, and manages all things, so that they contribute to the advancement of his own glory, and the advantage of his people. By his governing providence he directs all the actions and motions of his creatures, and powerfully determines them which way soever he pleases. All the creatures are called his host, because he marshals them as an army to serve his important purposes. The whole system of nature is ready to favour and act for men when he commands it, and it is ready to punish them when he gives it a commission. Thus he checked the Red Sea, and it obeyed his voice, Psal. cvi. 9. Its rapid motion quickly ceased, and the fluid waters were immediately ranged as defensive walls to secure the march of his people. At the command of God, the sea again recovered its wonted violence, and the watery walls came tumbling down upon the heads of the proud Egyptian oppressor and his host. The sea so exactly obeyed its orders, that not one Israelite was drowned, and not one Egyptian was saved alive. More particularly, the power of God appears in the moral government of the world.

(1.) In governing and ordering the hearts of men, so that they are not masters of their own affections, but often act quite contrary to what they had firmly resolved or proposed. Of which we have eminent instances in Esau and Balaam. He hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them what way he pleases. Thus he bent the hearts of the Egyptians to favour the Israelites, by sending them away with great riches given them by way of loan. He turned Jehoshaphat's enemies from him when they came with a purpose to destroy him, 2 Chron. xviii. 31.

2. In governing and managing the most stubborn creatures, as devils and wicked men. (1.) In his governing devils. They have great power, and are full of malice. The devil is always going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. We could

have no quiet nor safety in the world, if his power were not restrained, and his malice curbed by one that is mightier than the infernal fiend. He would turn all things upside down, plague the world, burn cities and houses, and plunder us of all the supports of life, if he were not held in a chain by the Omnipotent Governor of the world. But God overmasters his strength, so that he cannot move one hair's breadth beyond his tether. God has all the devils chained, and he governs all their motions. The devil could not touch Job in his person and goods without the divine permission; nor could he enter into the Gadarene swine without a special licence. If we consider the great malice of these invisible enemies, and the vast extent of their power, we will easily see that there could be no safety or security for men, if they were not curbed and restrained by a superior power. (2.) In governing wicked men. All the imaginations of their hearts are evil, and only evil continually. They are fully bent upon mischief, and drink iniquity like water. What unbridled licentiousness and headstrong fury would triumph in the world, and run with a rapid violence, if the Divine Power did not interpose to bear down the flood gates of it? Human society would be rooted up, the whole world drenched in blood, and all things would run into a sea of confusion, if God did not bridle and restrain the lusts and corruptions of men. The king of Assyria triumphed much in his design against Jerusalem; but how did God govern and manage that wild ass! Isa. xxxvii. 29. 'I will put my hook into thy nose, (says Jehovah), and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.' And we are told, Psal. lxxvi. 10. that 'the very wrath of man shall praise him, and that he will restrain the remainder of wrath.'

(3.) In raising up a church to himself in spite of all his enemies. This is specially seen in founding the New Testament church, and propagating the gospel through the world. The power of God appears admirable in planting the gospel, and converting the world to Christianity. For there were many and great difficulties in the way, as gross and execrable idolatry; and the nations were strongly confirmed and rooted in their idolatry, being trained up and inured to it from their infant state. It was as hard to make the Gentiles forsake the religion which they received from their birth, as to make the Africans change their skin, and the leopard his spots. The Pagan religion was derived from their progenitors through a long succession of ages. Hence the heathens accused the Christian religion of novelty, and urged nothing more plausibly than the argument of immemorial prescription for their superstition. They

would not consider whether it was just and reasonable, but with a blind deference yielded up themselves to the authority of the ancients. The pomp of the Pagan worship was very pleasing to the flesh; the magnificence of their temples, adorned with the trophies of superstition, their mysterious ceremonies, their music, their processions, their images and altars, their sacrifices and purifications, and the rest of the equipage of a carnal religion, drew their respects and strongly affected their minds through their senses. Whereas the religion of the gospel is spiritual and serious, holy and pure, and hath nothing to move the carnal part. There was then an universal depravation of manners among men; the whole earth was covered with abominations: the most unnatural lusts had lost the fear and shame that naturally attends them. We may see a melancholy picture of their most abandoned conversation, Rom. i. The powers of the world were bent against the gospel. The heathen philosophers strongly opposed it. When Paul preached at Athens, the Epicureans and Stoics entertained him with scorn and derision; 'What will this babbler say?' said they. The heathen priests conspired to obstruct it. The princes of the world thought themselves obliged to prevent the introduction of a new religion, lest their empire should be in hazard, or the greatness and majesty of it impaired thereby. If we consider the means by which the gospel was propagated, the Divine Power will evidently appear. The persons employed in this great work were a few illiterate fishermen, with a publican and a tent-maker, without authority and power to force men to obedience, and without the charms of eloquence to enforce the belief of the doctrines which they taught. Yet this doctrine prevailed, and the gospel had wonderful success through all the parts of the then known world, and that against all the power and policy of men and devils. Now, how could this possibly be, without a mighty operation of the power of God upon the hearts of men?

(4.) In preserving, defending, and supporting his church under the most terrible tempests of trouble and persecution which were raised against her. This is promised by our blessed Saviour, Matth. xvi. 18. 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' The most flourishing monarchies have decayed and wasted, and the strongest kingdoms have been broken in pieces; yet the church hath been preserved to this very day, notwithstanding all the subtle and potent enemies which in all ages have been pushing at her. Yea, God has preserved and delivered his church in the greatest extremities, when the danger in all human appearance was unavoidable; as in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in Esther's days, when a

bloody decree was issued to slay all the Jews. Yea, God hath sometimes delivered his church by very weak and contemptible-like instruments, such as Moses, a fugitive from Egypt, and Aaron, a poor captive in it; and sometimes by very unlikely means, as when he smote Egypt with armies of locusts and lice. In all ages of the world God has gloriously displayed his power in the preservation of his church and people, notwithstanding all the rage, power, and malice of their enemies.

(5.) In the conversion of the elect. Hence the gospel, which is the means and instrument of conversion, is called *the power of God*, and *the rod of his strength*; and the day of the success of the gospel in turning sinners to Christ, is called *the day of his power*, Psal. cx. 3. O what a mighty power must that be that stills the waves of a tempestuous sea, quells the lusts and stubbornness of the heart, demolishes the strong holds of sin in the soul, routs all the armies of corrupt nature, and makes the obstinate rebellious will strike sail to Christ! The power of God that is exerted here makes a man to think on other objects, and speak in another strain, than he did before. O how admirable is it, that carnal reason should be thus silenced; that legions of devils should be thus driven out; and that men should part with those sins which before they esteemed their chiefest ornaments, and stand at defiance with all the charming allurements and bitter discouragements of the world? The same power that raised Christ from the grave is exerted in the conversion of a sinner. Eph. i. 19, 20. There is greater power exerted in this case than there was in the creation of the world. For when God made the world, he met with no opposition; he spake the word, and it was done: but when he comes to convert a sinner, he meets with all the opposition which the devil and a corrupt heart can make against him. God wrought but one miracle in the creation: he spake the word and it was done; but there are many miracles wrought in conversion. The blind is made to see, the dead raised, and the deaf hears the voice of the Son of God. O the infinite power of Jehovah! In this work the mighty arm of the Lord is revealed.

(6.) In preserving the souls of believers amidst the many dangers to which they are exposed, and bringing them safely to glory at last. They have many enemies without, a legion of subtle and powerful devils, and a wicked and ensnaring world, with all its allurements and temptations; and they have many strong lusts and corruptions within; and their graces are but weak, and in their infancy and minority, while they are here: So that it may justly be matter of wonder how they are preserved. But the apostle tells us,

that they 'are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,' 1 Pet. i. 5. Indwelling corruption would soon quench grace in their hearts, if it were not kept alive by a divine power. But Christ hath pledged his faithfulness for it, that they shall be kept secure, John x. 28. It is his power that moderates the violence of temptations, supports his people under them, defeats the power of Satan, and bruises him under their feet.

4. *Lastly*, The power of God appears gloriously in the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ. Hence in scripture Christ is called *the power* as well as *the wisdom of God*. This is the most admirable work that ever God brought forth in the world. More particularly,

(1.) The power of God shines in Christ's miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin. The power of the Highest did overshadow her, Luke i. 35. and by a creative act framed the humanity of Christ of the substance of the virgin's body, and united it to the Divinity. This was foretold many ages before as the effect of the divine power. When Judah was oppressed by two potent kings, and despaired of any escape and deliverance to raise their drooping spirits, the prophet tells them, that he would give them a sign; and a wonderful one it was. Therefore it is said 'Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,' Isa. vii. 14. The argument is from the greater to the less: For if God will accomplish that stupendous and unheard-of wonder, much more will he rescue his people from the fury of their adversaries.

(2.) In uniting the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, and that without any confusion of the two natures, or changing the one into the other. The two natures of Christ are not mixed together, as liquors that incorporate with one another, when poured into the same vessel. The divine nature is not turned into the human, nor the human into the divine. One nature doth not swallow up another, and make a third distinct from both. But they are distinct, and yet united; conjoined, and yet unmixed: the properties of each nature are preserved entire. O what a wonder of power was here! that two natures, a divine and a human, infinitely distant in themselves, should meet together in a personal conjunction! Here one equal with God is found in the form of a servant; here God and man are united in one; the Creator and the creature are miraculously allied in the same subsistance. Here a God of unmixed blessedness is linked personally with a man of perpetual sorrows. That is an admirable expression, 'The Word was made flesh,' John i. 14. What can be more miraculous than for God to become man, and man to become God? that a person possessed of all the perfections and excellencies of the Deity should inherit all the in-

firmities and imperfections of humanity, sin only excepted? Was there not need of infinite power, to bring together terms which were so far asunder? Nothing less than an omnipotent power could effect and bring about what an infinite and incomprehensible wisdom did project in this matter.

(3.) In supporting the human nature of Christ, and keeping it from sinking under the terrible weight of divine wrath that came upon him for our sins, and making him victorious over the devil and all the powers of darkness. His human nature could not possibly have borne up under the wrath of God and the curse of the law, nor held out under such fearful contests with the powers of hell and the world, if it had not been upheld by infinite power. Hence his Father says concerning him, Isa. xlii. 1. 'Behold my servant whom I uphold.'

(4.) The divine power did evidently appear in raising Christ from the dead. The apostle tells us, that God exerted his mighty power in Christ when he raised him from the dead, Eph. i. 19. The unlocking the belly of the whale for the deliverance of Jonah, the rescue of Daniel from the den of lions, and restraining the fire from burning the three children, were signal declarations of the divine power, and types of the resurrection of our Redeemer. But all these are nothing to what is represented by them: for that was a power over natural causes, and curbing of beasts and restraining of elements; but in the resurrection of Christ, God exercised a power over himself, and quenched the flames of his own wrath, that was hotter than millions of Nebuchadnezzar's furnaces: he unlocked the prison doors wherein the curses of the law had lodged our Saviour, stronger than the belly and ribs of a leviathan. How admirable was it, that he should be raised from under the curse of the law, and the infinite weight of our sins, and brought forth with success and glory after his sharp encounter with the powers of hell! in this the power of God was gloriously manifested. Hence he is said to be raised from the dead 'by the glory of the Father,' *i. e.* by his glorious power; and 'declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead,' Rom. i. 4. All the miraculous proofs by which God acknowledged him for his Son during his life, had been ineffectual without this. If he had remained in the grave, it had been reasonable to believe him only an ordinary person, and that his death had been the just punishment of his presumption in calling himself the Son of God. But his resurrection from the dead was the most illustrious and convincing evidence, that really he was what he declared himself to be.

I shall conclude, on this point, with a few inferences.

1. God is omnipotent; that is, can do all things. It is true he cannot lie nor deny himself, for these are repugnant to his nature, and argue not power, but weakness and imperfection.

2. God's power never acts to its utmost extent. He can do more always than he either doth or will do, Matt. iii. 9. He can do all things possible; but he only doth what he hath decreed to be done, Mat. xxvi. 53, 54.

3. Hence we may be confirmed in our belief of the resurrection. Some are ready to reckon it a thing impossible, that there can be a recollection of the dispersed particles of men's bodies when they are dissolved into dust, and scattered into the four winds. But if we consider the power of God, this will abundantly answer all that can be objected against this truth. Hence saith the apostle, Acts xxvi. 8. 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?' And saith our Saviour to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.' Almighty power can meet with no let or bar. Unless the particles of men's bodies could be scattered beyond the reach of Almighty power, and grinded so small as to escape the knowledge and care of God, this dispersion can make nothing against the faith and possibility of the resurrection.

4. Is God of infinite power? then all his promises shall be most certainly accomplished, whatever difficulties may be in the way thereof. For God is able to bring to pass whatever he has promised to his people. Therefore difficulty or improbability should never discourage or weaken our faith, because the power of God is infinite.

5. They are absolutely sure of salvation who are kept by the power of God; for God is able to keep them from falling, and his power is engaged for their preservation. They are surrounded with and infolded in the arms of Omnipotence; their souls are in safe custody, being committed unto Christ, from whose hands none can pluck them.

6. Wo to those against whom the power of God is set; for 'they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Consider this, O ye sinners, and flee from the wrath that is to come.

7. Abuse not the power of God, by limiting it, as Israel did in the wilderness, Psal. lxxviii. 19. by trusting to an arm of flesh, as too many are apt to do, more than to the God of power, Jer. xvii. 5. or by fearing the wrath of man, who can only kill the body, and not dreading the displeasure of Almighty God, Isa. li. 12, 13.

8. *Lastly*, Improve the power of God by faith, depending upon it for the performance of all his gracious promises towards you and the church; for 'he can work, and who shall let it?' for strength to resist and vanquish, sin, Satan, and the world, saying, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' and for grace to enable you to the performance of every commanded duty, saying with the apostle, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

Fourthly, The next communicable attribute of God that falls to be considered is holiness, which is the absolute purity of his nature, whereby he delights in whatever is agreeable to his holy will, and in the resemblance of it that is in the creatures. Or, it is the perfect rectitude and integrity of the divine essence, whereby in all that he doth he acts like himself and for himself, delighting in whatever is agreeable to his will and nature, and abhorring whatever is contrary thereto. Hence he is said to be 'glorious in holiness,' Exod. xv. 11. And 'he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity,' Hab. i. 13. And he is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in holiness. Hence the heavenly host proclaim, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts,' Isa. vi. 3.

Now, God is, (1.) Necessarily holy. Not only he will not, but he cannot look on iniquity. His holiness is not only an act of his will, but belongeth to his essence. (2.) He is essentially holy. Holiness is the essential glory of the divine nature; yea, it is his very essence. Holiness in men is an accessary quality and superadded gift, and is separable from the creature. But in God his essence and his holiness are the same. He could as soon cease to be God, as cease to be holy. (3.) He is perfectly holy. The best saints on earth are but holy in part; there is still a mixture of sin in them while here. But, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,' 1 John i. 5. (4.) He is universally holy; holy in all that he is, in all that he hath, and in all that he doth. He is holy in his name, in his nature, in his word, and in his works. (5.) He is originally holy. Angels and men are made holy; but God is holy of himself, and he is the original spring of all the holiness that is in the creatures. (6.) He is exemplarily holy. The holiness of God is the example and pattern of all the holiness that is in the creatures. Hence we are required to 'be holy as God is holy,' 1 Pet. i. 16. (7.) He is perpetually and unchangeably holy. The best men on earth may change to the worse; they may grow less holy than they are; but God is immutable in his holiness. He cannot grow more holy than he is, because he is infinitely holy, and his holiness is incapable of any addition. Nor can he grow less holy than he is, because then he would cease to be God.

The holiness of God is manifested and discovered,

1. In his word; and that both in the precepts and promises thereof, God manifested his hatred and detestation of sin even in a variety of sacrifices under the ceremonial law; and the occasional washings and sprinklings upon ceremonial defilements, which polluted only the body, were a clear proof, that every thing that had a resemblance to evil was loathsome to God. All the legal sacrifices, washings, and purifications, were designed to express what an evil sin is, and how hateful and abominable it is to him. But the holiness of God is most remarkably expressed in the moral law. Hence *the law* is said to be *holy*, Rom. vii. 12. It is a true transcript of the holiness of God. And it is holy in its precepts. It requires an exact, perfect, and complete holiness in the whole man, in every faculty of the soul, and in every member of the body. It is holy in its prohibitions. It forbids and condemns all impurity and filthiness whatsoever. It discharges not only sinful words and actions, gross and atrocious crimes, and profane, blasphemous, and unprofitable speeches, but all sinful thoughts and irregular motions of the heart. Hence is that exhortation, Jer. iv. 14. 'O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?' It is holy in its threatenings. All these have their fundamental root in the holiness of God, and are a branch of this essential perfection. All the terrible threatenings annexed to the law are declarations of the holiness and purity of God, and of his infinite hatred and detestation of sin.

Again, the holiness of God appears in the promises of the word. They are called *holy promises*, Psal. cv. 42. and they are designed to promote and encourage true holiness. Hence says the apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.' By them we are 'made partakers of a divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4.

2. The holiness of God is manifested in his works. Hence the Psalmist saith, 'The Lord is holy in all his works,' Psal. cxlv. 17. More particularly,

(1.) The divine holiness appears in the creation of man. Solomon tells us, Eccl. vii. 29. that 'God made man upright;' and Moses says, that he was 'made after the image of God,' Gen. i. 27. Now, the image of God in man consists chiefly in holiness. Therefore the *new man* is said to be 'created after God in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. iv. 24. Adam was made with a perfection of grace. There was an entire and universal rectitude in all its faculties, disposing them to their proper operations. There was no disorder among his affections, but a perfect agreement between the flesh and

the spirit; and they both joined in the service of God. He fully obeyed the first and great command, of loving the Lord with all his soul and strength, and his love to other things was regulated by his love to God. When Adam dropt from the creating finger of God, he had knowledge in his understanding, sanctity in his will, and rectitude in his affections. There was such a harmony among all his faculties, that his members yielded to his affections, his affections to his will, his will obeyed his reason, and his reason was subject to the law of God. Here then was a display of the divine purity.

(2.) In the works of Providence; Particularly in his judicial proceedings against sinners for the violation of his holy and righteous laws. All the fearful judgments which have been poured down upon sinners, spring from God's holiness and hatred of sin. All the dreadful storms and tempests in the world are blown up by it. All diseases and sicknesses, wars, pestilence, plagues, and famines, are designed to vindicate God's holiness and hatred of sin. And therefore, when God had smitten the two sons of Aaron for offering strange fire, he says, 'I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh me, and before all the congregation I will be glorified,' Lev. x. 3. He glorified himself in declaring by that act, before all the people, that he is a holy God, that cannot endure sin and disobedience. More particularly,

[1.] God's holiness and hatred of sin is clearly manifested in his punishing the angels that sinned. It is said, 2 Pet. ii. 4. 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.' Neither their mighty numbers, nor the nobility of their natures, could incline their offended Sovereign to spare them; they were immediately turned out of heaven, and expelled from the divine presence. Their case is hopeless and helpless; no mercy will ever be shewn to one of them, being under the blackness of darkness for ever.

[2.] In the punishment threatened and inflicted on man for his first apostasy from God. Man in his first state was the friend and favourite of heaven; by his extraction and descent he was the Son of God, a little lower than the angels; consecrated and crowned for the service of his Maker, and appointed as king over the inferior world; he was placed in paradise, the garden of God, and admitted to fellowship and communion with him. But sin hath divested him of all his dignity and glory. By his rebellion against his Creator, he made a forfeiture of his dominion, and so lost the obedience of the sensible creatures, and the service of the insensible. He was

thrust out of paradise, banished from the presence of God, and debarred from fellowship and communion with him. God immediately sentenced him and all his posterity to misery, death, and ruin. This is a clear demonstration of the infinite purity and holiness of God. But blessed be God, for Jesus Christ, the second Adam, who hath restored that which the first Adam took away.

[3.] In executing terrible and strange judgments upon sinners. It was for sin that God drowned the old world with a deluge of water, rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and made the earth open her mouth, and swallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. It was for sin that God brought terrible destroying judgments upon Jerusalem. All calamities and judgments spring from this bitter root, as sword, pestilence, distempers of body, perplexities of mind, poverty, reproach, and disgrace, and whatever is grievous and afflictive to men. All this shows how hateful sin is to God.

[4.] In punishing sins seemingly small with great and heavy judgments. A multitude of angels were sent down to hell for an aspiring thought, as some think. Uzzah, a good man, was struck dead in a moment for touching the ark; yea, fifty thousand Bethshemites were smitten dead for looking into it. We are apt to entertain slight thoughts of many sins: but God hath set forth some as examples of his hatred and abhorrence of sins seemingly small, for a warning to others, and a testimony and demonstration of his exact holiness.

[5.] In bringing heavy afflictions on his own people for sin. Even the sins of believers in Christ do sometimes cost them very dear. He will not suffer them to pass without correction for their transgressions. Though they are exempted from everlasting torments in hell, yet they are not spared from the furnace of affliction here on earth. We have instances of this in David, Solomon, Jonah, and other saints. Yea, sometimes God in this life, punishes sin more severely in his own people than in other men. Moses was excluded from the land of Canaan but for speaking unadvisedly with his lips, though many greater sinners were suffered to enter in. Such severity towards his own people is a plain demonstration, that God hates sin as sin, and not because the worst men commit it.

[6.] In sentencing so many of Adam's posterity to everlasting torments for sin. That an infinitely good God, who is goodness itself, and delights in mercy, should adjudge so many of his own creatures to the everlasting pains and torments of hell, must proceed from his infinite holiness, on account of something infinitely detested and abhorred by him.

3. The holiness of God appears in our redemption by Jesus Christ. Here his love to holiness and his hatred of sin is most conspicuous. All the demonstrations that ever God gave of his hatred of sin were nothing in comparison of this. Neither all the vials of wrath and judgment which God hath poured out since the world began, nor the flaming furnace of a sinner's conscience, nor the groans and roarings of the damned in hell, nor that irreversible sentence pronounced against the fallen angels, do afford such a demonstration of the divine holiness, and hatred of sin, as the death and sufferings of the blessed Redeemer. This will appear, if ye consider,

(1.) The great dignity and excellency of his person. He was the eternal and only begotten Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Yet he must descend from the throne of his majesty, divest himself of his robes of insupportable light, take upon him the form of a servant, become a curse, and bleed to death for sin. Did ever sin appear so hateful to God as here? To demonstrate God's infinite holiness, and hatred of sin, he would have the most glorious and most excellent person in heaven and earth to suffer for it. He would have his own Son to die on a disgraceful cross, and be exposed to the terrible flames of divine wrath, rather than sin should live, and his holiness remain for ever disparaged by the violations of his law.

(2.) How dear he was to his Father. He was his only begotten Son, he had not another; the only darling and the chief delight of his soul, who had lain in his bosom from all eternity. Yet as dear as he was to God, he would not and could not spare him, when he stood charged with his people's sins. For saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 32. 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' As he spared him not in a way of free bounty, giving him freely as a ransom for their souls! so he spared him not in a way of vindictive justice, but exacted the utmost mite of satisfaction from him for their sins.

(3.) The greatness of his sufferings. Indeed the extremity of his sufferings cannot be expressed. Insensible nature, as if it had been capable of understanding and affection, was disordered in its whole frame at his death. The sun forsook his shining, and clothed the whole heavens in black; so that the air was dark at noon-day, as if it had been midnight. The earth shook and trembled, the rocks were rent asunder, and universal nature shrank. Christ suffered all that wrath which was due to the elect for their sins. His sufferings were equivalent to those of the damned. He suffered a punishment of loss: for all the comforting influences of the Spirit were

suspended for a time. The divine nature kept back all its joys from the human nature of Christ, in the time of his greatest sufferings. We deserved to have been separated from God for ever; and therefore our Redeemer was deserted for a time. There was a suspension of all joy and comfort from his soul, when he needed it most. This was most afflicting and cutting to him, who had never seen a frown in his Father's face before. It made him cry out with a lamentable accent, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Again, he suffered a punishment of sense, and that with respect to both his body and soul. The elect had forfeited both soul and body to divine vengeance; and therefore Christ suffered in both. The sufferings of his body were indeed terrible. It was filled with exquisite torture and pain. His hands and his feet, the most sensible parts were pierced with nails. His body was distended with such pains and torments as when all the parts are out of joint. Hence it is said of him, Psal. xxii. 14, 15. 'I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels, my strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me unto the dust of death.' Now, thus did the Son of God suffer. His pure and blessed hands, which were never stretched out but to do good, were pierced and rent asunder: and those feet which bore the Redeemer of the world, and for which the very waters had a reverence, were nailed to a tree. His body which was the precious workmanship of the Holy Ghost, and the temple of the Deity was destroyed. But his bodily sufferings were but the body of his sufferings. It was the sufferings of his soul that was the soul of his sufferings. No tongue can tell you what he endured here. When all the comforting influences of the Spirit were suspended, then an impetuous torrent of unmixed sorrows broke into his soul. O what agonies and conflicts, what sharp encounters, and distresses did he meet with from the wrath of God that was poured out upon him! He bore the wrath of an angry God, pure wrath without any alloy or mixture, and all that wrath which was due to the elect through all eternity for their innumerable sins. Sin was so hateful to God, that nothing could expiate it, or satisfy for it, but the death and bitter agonies of his dear Son.

(4.) Consider the cause of his sufferings. It was not for any sin of his own, for he had none, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. They were made his only by a voluntary susception, by taking his people's sins upon him. And though they were only imputed to him, yet God would not spare him. So that there is nothing wherein the divine holiness and hatred of sin is so

manifest as in the sufferings of his own dear Son. This was a greater demonstration thereof than if all men and angels had suffered for it eternally in hell-fire.

It remains now to shut up this point with a few inferences.

1. Hence see the great evil of sin. It strikes against the divine holiness, which is the peculiar glory of the Deity; so that it is not only contrary to our own interest, but to the very nature of God. All sin aims in general at the being of God, but especially at the holiness of his being. There are some sins that strike more directly against one divine perfection, and some against another; but all sins agree together in their enmity against the holiness of God. Hence, when Sennacherib's sin is aggravated, the Holy Spirit takes the rise from this perfection, 2 Kings xix. 22. 'Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.' God cannot but hate that which is directly opposite to the glory of his nature, and the lustre and varnish of all his other perfections. Now, what an horrid evil must that be which is so contrary to the holy nature of God, and which is infinitely detested and abhorred by him?

2. Hence see the excellency of true gospel-holiness. Holiness is the glory and beauty of God, and the glory of the heavenly angels; and therefore it must be the glory of men and women, that which makes them truly glorious. In this respect the king's daughter is said to be *all glorious within*. The church is glorious, because she is holy. Hence Christ sanctifies and cleanses it, that he may present it to himself a glorious church, Eph. v. 25, 26. Holiness is the image of God in the rational creature. The more holy one is, the more like is he to God. This is our chief excellency. Man's original glory and happiness consisted in this; and the excellency of angels above devils lies in this. Holiness hath a self-evidencing excellency in it. There is such a beauty and majesty in it, as commands an acknowledgment of it from the consciences of all sorts of knowing men.

3. God can have no gracious communion with unholy sinners: 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' 2 Cor. vi. 14. It is simply impossible that an infinitely holy God should embrace vile polluted sinners that are not washed from their filthiness. They can have no fellowship with him here or hereafter. God will not give impure sinners one good look; for 'he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity,' Hab. i. 13. All communion is founded on union, and union upon likeness. But what

likeness is there between a holy God and vile polluted creatures? Therefore they can never expect to have any communion with him, unless they be made clean. Hence they are directed to this, in order to their communion with God, Jam. iv. 8. 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

4. The best of saints, who have attained the highest degrees, and made the greatest improvements in holiness and purity, may be ashamed in the presence of an infinitely holy God; for they are far short of that holiness which God requires, and all the purity they have attained is sadly tinctured with impurity. It had this effect upon the evangelical prophet, when he had a vision of the holy God. Isa. vi. 5. 'Wo is me,' says he, 'for I am undone, because I am of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'

5. Despisers of holiness are despisers of God. For holiness is the glory of God, and that in which he delights above all things. For men, therefore, to despise holiness in the saints, and to make a mock of their holy lives and practices, is a high contempt of the holy God, who will highly resent such a great indignity done him.

6. There is no access to God without a Mediator. 'For our God is a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29, and our sin hath made us as stubble fully dry. He is infinitely pure and holy, and we are vile filthy creatures; so that it is quite impossible for us to have any access to him, or communion with him, on our own account. We have all reason to cry out, as 1 Sam. vi. 20. 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' There is no standing before him without a Mediator. The spots and blemishes of our best duties cannot be hid from the eyes of his holiness. He cannot accept of a righteousness lower than that which bears some suitableness to the holiness of his nature: but even our highest obedience and best righteousness does not in any degree suit the divine holiness: and therefore it cannot challenge any acceptance with God. The righteousness of Christ, being the righteousness of God, a perfect and unspotted righteousness, is that wherein alone the holiness of God can acquiesce, and is the foundation of all access to God, and communion with him.

7. Is God infinitely and necessarily holy, so that he cannot but hate sin? then how admirable is the patience of God towards this

land, and the generation wherein we live? How much sin and wickedness abounds amongst us? Alas! all kinds of sin wofully prevail at this day among all ranks and degrees of persons, high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble; all have corrupted their way. Sins of a heinous nature are to be found among us, such as bid God defiance; horrid blasphemies, hideous oaths, vile adulteries, cruel oppressions, contempt of religion, and gross profanation of the Lord's day. Add to all these, ingratitude, worldliness, pride, and self-conceit among such as are more eminent for a profession of religion. All these are committed under a clear gospel-light, after signal mercies and deliverances, against the most solemn covenant engagements, personal and national, and against manifold rebukes and warnings from the word and providence of God. And alas! how are these sins increased and multiplied? Who can compute the number of the sins which one profane wretch is guilty of? But what are these to the sins of a whole city? and what are the sins of a whole city to the sins of the whole nation? Who can compute the number of the sins which Scotland is guilty of in one day? But what are these to the sins which have been committed for a great many years past? Ah! we are a people deeply laden with iniquity. O what matter of admiration is here, that God bears so long with us! His holiness and purity renders his patience the more astonishing. O the riches of his forbearance towards us! Admire it and adore it, and praise and bless him for it; and beware of abusing it, by taking liberty to go on in sin, because of it. Such an amazing patience, if abused, will render our judgment the more severe.

8. *Lastly*, Be exhorted to make a suitable improvement of the holiness of God, by fleeing to Jesus Christ, whose perfect righteousness alone can make you acceptable to God, and whose Spirit can sanctify and cleanse you; by giving thanks at the remembrance of the divine holiness, by proclaiming the glory thereof; and by studying holiness in all manner of life and conversation.

Fifthly, The next communicable attribute of God that falls under our consideration is his *justice*, which is the perfect rectitude of his nature, whereby he is infinitely righteous and equal, both in himself, and in all his dealings with his creatures, Deut. xxxii. 4. 'Just and right is he.' God is just to himself in acting in all things agreeable to his nature and perfections. All his actions are such as become such a pure and holy being as he is. He cannot do any thing that is contrary to the perfection of his nature: he cannot lie nor deny himself. He is just to himself in maintaining his own glory, and his divine rights and prerogatives; for he will not give his glory to another. And he is just towards his creatures in all

his dealings with them, particularly with man. Here God may be considered, 1. As a sovereign Lord; and, 2. As supreme governor and Judge of the world.

(1.) As sovereign Lord. And so he hath a right to do with his own what he will. He may order and dispose of all the creatures according to his pleasure, Dan. iv. 35. We are all in his hand as clay in the hand of the potter. He hath a sovereign and absolute right to use and dispose of us according to his own pleasure, to set bounds to our habitation, carve out our lot in the world, and set us high or low, in prosperity or adversity, as he pleaseth. It is so also, as to his dispensations of grace. He may give grace to whom he will, and withhold it from whom he will; and what he wills in that matter is just and right, because he wills it.

2. As supreme Governor and Judge of the world. And so he is just in governing his rational creatures in a way agreeable to their nature, according to a law which he has given them. His justice in this character is either legislative or executive.

(1.) There is a legislative justice, which is that whereby he gives most just and righteous laws to his creatures, commanding and forbidding what is fit for them in right reason to do and forbear. 'For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver,' Isa. xxxiii. 22. Man being a reasonable creature, capable of moral government, therefore, that God might rule him according to his nature, he hath given him a law, confirmed by promises of reward, to draw him by hope, and by threatenings of punishment to deter him by fear. Hence Moses tells the Israelites, that he had 'set before them life and good, and death and evil,' Deut. xxx. 15. and that he had 'set before them life and death, blessing and cursing,' ver. 19.

(2.) There is God's executive justice, called also by some his judicial justice, by others his distributive justice. In this respect he is just in giving every one his due, and in rendering unto all men according to their works, without respect of persons. This executive justice of God is either remunerative or afflictive.

[1.] There is a remunerative or rewarding justice. God is just in rewarding the righteous. Psal. lviii. 11. 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous.' The saints shall not serve him for nought. Though they may be losers for him, yet they shall not be losers by him, Heb. vi. 10. 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.' He bountifully rewards his people's obedience, and their diligence and faithfulness in his service. Hence David says, Psal. xviii. 20. 'The Lord rewardeth me according to my righteousness.' Sometimes he rewards them with temporal blessings: for

godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as that which is to come. Sometimes Providence doth notably interpose, and load obedience with blessings here in the world, to the conviction of all beholders, so that men are constrained to say, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous.' But however he do as to outward things, yet he rewards his people with inward blessings. There are fresh supplies and influences of grace, near and intimate communion with him, sweet manifestations of his favour and love, intimations of peace and pardon, and joy and peace in believing, &c. Even 'in keeping his commandments there is great reward,' Psal. xix. 11. And he rewards them with eternal blessings, 2 Thess. i. 7. Now, this reward is not of debt but of grace. It doth not imply any merit, but is free and gratuitous. It is not because they deserve it, but because Christ has merited it, and God has graciously promised it.

(2.) There is an afflictive justice. God is just in all the afflictions and troubles which he brings upon his creatures; because he always punishes sinners by a law. The violations of his holy and righteous laws make them obnoxious to his judgments. Sometimes God sends afflictions upon people to chastise and correct them for their sins. Now, all the troubles of believers are of this kind: for as many as he loves, he rebukes and chastens. Some of their afflictions are intended to reduce them from their strayings. Hence says David, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray,' and, 'It was good for me that I was afflicted.' Indeed God chuseth some in the furnace of affliction. The hot furnace is God's work-house wherein he sometimes formeth vessels of honour. Manasseh is an eminent instance of this. Many that were never serious before, are brought to consider their ways in their affliction. Sometimes God takes vengeance on wicked men for their sins and disobedience to his laws: and this is called vindictive justice, Rom. iii. 5, 6. which is essential to the nature of God, and is not merely an effect of his will. He cannot let sin go unpunished. He not only will not, but he cannot acquit the wicked. But more of this afterwards.

The justice of God is manifested and discovered,

1. In the temporal judgments which he brings upon sinners even in this life. The saints own this, Neh. ix. 33. 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us.' The end and design of all God's judgments is to witness to the world, that he is a just and righteous God. All the fearful plagues and terrible judgments which God has brought upon the world, proclaim and manifest his justice.

2. In sentencing so many of Adam's posterity to everlasting pains and torments for sin, according to that dreadful sentence which shall be pronounced at the last day, Matth. xxv. 41. 'Depart from

me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' If you could descend into the bottomless pit, and view the pains and torments of hell, and hear the terrible shrieks and roarings of the damned wallowing in these sulphureous flames, you could not shun to cry out, O the severity of divine justice! Though they are the works of God's own hands, and roar and cry under their torments, yet they cannot obtain any mitigation of their pains, nay, not so much as one drop of water to cool their tongues. That an infinitely good and gracious God, that delights in mercy, should thus torment so many of his own creatures, O how incorruptible must his justice be!

3. In the death and sufferings of Christ. God gave his beloved Son to the death for this end, that it might be known what a just and righteous God he is. So the apostle shews us, Rom. iii. 25. 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness,' &c. He set him forth in garments rolled in blood, to declare his justice and righteousness to the world. After man turned rebel, and apostatised from God, there was no way to keep up the credit and honour of divine justice, but either a strict execution of the law's sentence, or a full satisfaction. The execution would have destroyed the whole race of Adam. Therefore Christ stepped in, and made a sufficient satisfaction by his death and sufferings, that so God might exercise his mercy without prejudice to his justice. Thus the blood of the Son of God must be shed for sin, to let the world see that he is a just and righteous God. The justice of God could and would be satisfied with no less. Hence it is said, Rom. viii. 32. 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the death for us all.' If forbearance might have been expected from any, surely it might from God, who is full of pity and tender mercy: yet God in this case spared him not. If one might have expected sparing mercy and abatement from any, surely Christ might most of all expect it from his own Father; yet God spared not his own Son. Sparing mercy is the lowest degree of mercy; yet it was denied to Christ, when he stood in the room of the elect. God abated him not a minute of the time appointed for his sufferings, nor one degree of the wrath which he was to bear. Nay, though in the garden, when Christ fell on the ground, and put up that lamentable and pitiful cry, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' yet no abatement was granted to him. The Father of mercies saw his dear Son humbled in his presence, and yet dealt with him in extreme severity. The sword of justice was in a manner asleep before, in all the terrible judgments which had been executed on the world, but now it must be awakened and

roused up to pierce the heart of the blessed Redeemer. Hence it is said, Zech. xiii. 7. 'Awake O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd.' If divine justice had descended from heaven in a visible form, and hanged up millions of sinners in chains of wrath, it had not been such a demonstration of the wrath of God, and his hatred of sin, as the death and sufferings of his own Son. When we hear that God exposed his own Son to the utmost severity of wrath and vengeance, may we not justly cry out O the infinite evil of sin! O the inflexible severity of divine justice! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

4. The justice of God will be clearly manifested at the great day. God hath reared up many trophies already to the honour of his power and justice out of the ruins of his most insolent enemies: but then will be the most solemn triumph of divine justice. The apostle tells us, Acts xvii. 31. that 'he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' On that awful day the justice and righteousness of God shall be clearly revealed, therefore it is called 'the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom. ii. 5. The equity of God's dealings and dispensations is not now so fully seen: but all will be open and manifest on that day. Then he will liberally reward the righteous, and severely punish the wicked.

5. God's justice will shine for ever in the torments of the damned in hell. The smoke of their furnace, their yellings and roarings, will proclaim through eternity the inexorable justice and severity of God. It is not enough for the satisfaction of his justice to deprive them of heaven and happiness; but he will inflict the most tormenting punishment upon sense and conscience in hell. For as both soul and body were guilty in this life, the one as the guide, the other as the instrument of sin, so it is but just and equal that they should both feel the penal effects of it hereafter. Sinners shall then be tormented in that wherein they most delighted: they shall then be invested with those objects which will cause the most dolorous perceptions in their sensitive faculties. The lake of fire and brimstone, the blackness of darkness, for ever, are words of a terrible signification. But no words can fully express the terrible ingredients of their misery. Their punishment will be in proportion to the glory of God's majesty that is provoked, and the extent of his power. And as the soul was the principal, and the body but an accessary in the works of sin; so its capacious faculties shall be far

more tormented than the limited faculties of the outward senses. The fiery attributes of God shall be transmitted through the glass of conscience, and concentred upon damned spirits. The fire without will not be so tormenting as the fire within them. Then all the tormenting passions will be inflamed. What rancour, reluctance, and rage, will there be against the just power that sentenced them to hell! what impatience and indignation against themselves for their wilful and inexcusable sins, the just cause of it! how will they curse their creation, and wish their utter extinction as the final remedy of their misery! But all their ardent wishes will be in vain. For the guilt of sin will never be expiated, nor God so far reconciled as to annihilate them. As long as there is justice in heaven, or fire in hell, as long as God and eternity shall continue, they must suffer those torments which the strength and patience of an angel cannot bear one hour. The justice of God will blaze forth for ever in the agonies and torments of the damned.

It may not be improper here to take notice of, and answer some objections that are made against the divine justice.

Object. 1. If God be infinitely just and righteous, how stands it with his justice that insolent contemners of his majesty and laws should prosper in the world? This was observed by the saints long ago; see Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6, 7, 12; and has proved a stumbling-block to some of God's own children, and has been apt to make them question his justice; see Job xxi. 7.—14. Jer. xii. 1, 2. But in answer, consider,

1. That the wicked may be sometimes instruments to do God's work. Though they do not design and intend his glory, yet they may be instrumental in promoting it. Thus Cyrus was instrumental for the building of God's temple at Jerusalem. Now there is some kind of justice in it that such persons should have a temporal reward. God is pleased to suffer those to prosper under whose wings his own people are sheltered. He will not be in any man's debt. Nebuchadnezzar did some service for God, and the Lord rewarded him for it by granting him an enlargement of greatness, Ezek. xxix. 18, 19, 20.

2. God doth not always let the wicked prosper in their sin. There are some whom he punisheth openly, that his justice may be observed by all. Hence the Psalmist saith, 'The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands,' Psal. ix. 16. Sometimes their prosperity is but short lived, and they are suddenly cast down, as the Psalmist remarks, Psal. lxxiii. 18, 19, 20. His justice is seen striking men dead sometimes in the very act of sin; as in the case of Zimri and Cozbi, Pharaoh, Sennacherib, &c.

3. God suffers men to go on in sin and prosper, that he may render them the more inexcusable. This goodness and forbearance should lead them to repentance; and when it does not, it aggravates their sin, and makes them the more inexcusable, when he comes to reckon with them. Hence it is said of Jezebel, 'I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not,' Rev. ii. 21. God spins out his mercies toward sinners; and if they do not repent and amend, his patience will be a witness against them, and his justice will be more cleared in their condemnation.

4. If God let the wicked prosper for a while, the vial of his wrath is all that while filling up, his sword is whetting and though he forbear them for a time, yet long-suffering is not forgiveness. The longer it be ere he give the blow, it will be the heavier when it comes. The last scene of justice is coming, when the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. There is a day of wrath approaching, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Then he will glorify his justice in taking vengeance on them for all their sins. God hath an eternity in which he will punish the wicked. Divine justice may be as a lion asleep for a time: but at last this lion will awake, and roar upon the sinner. Their long continued prosperity will heighten their eternal condemnation. There are many sinners in hell who lived in great pomp and prosperity in the world, and are now roaring under the terrible lashes of inexorable justice. Thus ye may see that the prosperity of the wicked is consistent enough with the justice of God.

Object. 2. God's own people oft-times suffer great afflictions in the world; they are persecuted and oppressed, and meet with a variety of troubles, Psal. lxxiii. 14. How stands this with the justice of God?

Ans. 1. The ways of God's judgments, though they are sometimes secret, yet they are never unjust. God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. There are culpable causes in them from which their afflictions spring. They have their spots and blemishes as well as others. Though they may be free from gross and atrocious crimes, yet they are guilty of much pride and passion, censoriousness, worldliness, &c. And the sins of God's people are more provoking in his sight than the sins of other men. And God will not suffer them to pass without correction, Amos iii. 2. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.' This justifies God in all the evils that befal them.

2. All the trials and sufferings of the godly are designed to refine and purify them, to promote their spiritual and eternal good, Heb.

xii. 10. Nothing proclaims God's faithfulness more than his taking such a course with them as may make them better. Hence says David, Psal. cxix. 75. 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' Though they are sometimes pinched with wants, and meet with various outward troubles, yet even these are the accomplishments of a gracious promise, and are ordered for their good. It is to chastise them for their sin, and quicken them to repentance and mortification, to try and exercise their faith and patience, their sincerity and love to God, to wean their hearts from the world, and to promote their growth in grace.

3. It is no injustice in God to inflict a lesser punishment to prevent a greater. The best of God's children have that in them which is meritorious of hell; and doth God any wrong to them when he useth only the rod, when they deserved the scorpion? An earthly parent will not be reckoned cruel or unjust, if he only correct his children who deserved to be disinherited. When God corrects his children, he only puts wormwood into their cup, whereas he might fill it up with fire and brimstone. Under the greatest pressure, they have just cause rather to admire his mercy, than to complain of his justice. So did the afflicted church, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.'

Object. 3. If God be infinitely just, how could he transfer the punishment from the guilty? This is the objection of the Socinians against Christ's suffering for the sins of the elect. It is a violation of justice, say they, to transfer the punishment from one to another. How then could the righteous God punish his innocent Son for our sins?

I answer to this in general, That in some cases it is not unjust to punish the innocent for the guilty. For though an innocent person cannot suffer as innocent without injustice, yet he may voluntarily contract an obligation which will expose him to deserved sufferings. The innocent may suffer for the guilty, when he has power to dispose of his own life, and puts himself freely and voluntarily under an obligation to suffer, and is admitted to suffer by him who has power to punish, and when no detriment, but rather an advantage, accrues to the public thereby. In these circumstances, justice hath nothing to say against the punishing of an innocent person in the room of the guilty. Now, there is a concurrence of all these in the case in hand. For,

1. Christ had absolute power to dispose of himself. One reason why a man is not allowed to lay down his life for another is, because his life is not at his own disposal. But Christ was absolute

lord of his own life, and had power to keep it or lay it down as he pleased. So he declares, John x. 18. 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.'

2. He freely consented to suffer for his people, and to undergo the punishment that they deserved. To compel an innocent person to suffer for the offences of another, may be an injury. But in this case there was no constraint: for Christ most willingly offered himself: yea, he was not only willing, but most earnest and desirous to suffer and die in our room, Luke xii. 50. 'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?'

3. The Father admitted him as our Surety, and was well content that his sufferings should stand for ours, and that we thereupon should be absolved and discharged. It was the Father's will that Christ should undertake this work. Hence it is said, Psal. xl. 8. 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' And the Father loved Christ, because he so cheerfully consented to it, John x. 17. 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.'

4. There was no detriment to the public by Christ's death; but, on the contrary, many advantages redounded to it thereby. One reason why an innocent man cannot suffer for a malefactor is, because the community would lose a good man, and might suffer by the sparing of an ill member, and the innocent sufferer cannot have his life restored again being once lost. But in this case all things are quite otherwise: for Christ laid down his life, but so as to take it up again. He rose again on the third day, and death was swallowed up of victory. And those for whom he suffered were reclaimed, effectually changed, and made serviceable to God and man. So that here there was no injury done to any party by Christ's sufferings, though an innocent person. Not to them for whom he died; for they have inexpressible benefit thereby: he is made to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Not to the person suffering: for he was perfectly willing, and suffered nothing without his own consent. Not to God: for he himself found out the ransom, and admitted Christ as our Surety. Not to any thing concerned in the government of God: for by the death of Christ all the ends of God's government were secured. His honour was hereby vindicated, the authority of his law preserved, and his subjects, by such an instance of severity on his own Son, were deterred from violating it. So that there is no injustice to any in God's punishing Christ in his people's stead.

Object. 4. How is it consistent with the justice of God to punish temporary sins with eternal torments in hell? Some think it hard, and scarcely consistent with infinite justice, to inflict eternal punishment for sins committed in a little time. But to clear the justice of God in this, consider,

1. That eternal punishment is agreeable to the sanction of the law. The wisdom of God required, that the penalty threatened upon the transgressor should be in its own nature so dreadful and terrible, that the fear of it might conquer and over-rule all the allurements and temptations to sin. If it had not been so, it would have reflected upon the wisdom of the Lawgiver, as if he had been defective, in not binding his subjects firmly enough to their duty, and the ends of government would not have been obtained. And therefore the first and second death was threatened to Adam in case of disobedience. And fear, as a watchful sentinel, was placed in his breast, that no guilty thought or irregular desire should enter in to break the tables of the law deposited there. So that eternal death is due to sinners by the sanction of the law.

2. The righteousness of God in punishing the wicked for ever in hell will appear, if ye consider that God by his infallible promise assures us, that all who sincerely serve and obey him shall be rewarded with everlasting happiness. They shall receive a blessedness most worthy of God to bestow, a blessedness that far surmounts our most comprehensive thoughts and imaginations. For eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him. Now, if everlasting felicity be despised and rejected, nothing remains but endless misery to be the sinner's portion. The consequence is infallible: For if sin, with an eternal hell in its retinue be chosen and embraced, it is most just and equal that the rational creature should inherit the fruit of its own choice. What can be more just and reasonable, than that those who are the slaves of the devil, and maintain his party here in the world, should have their recompense with him for ever hereafter? Nothing can be more just, than that those who now say to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, should receive that dreadful sentence at last, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.*

3. The punishment of the damned must be eternal, because of the immense guilt and infinite evil of sin. It is owned by common reason, that there ought to be a proportion between the quality of the offence and the degree of the punishment. Justice takes the scales into its hand before it takes the sword. It is a rule in all sorts of judicature, that the degrees of an offence arise according to

the degrees of dignity in the person offended. Now, the majesty of God is truly infinite, against whom sin is committed; and consequently the guilt of sin exceeds our boundless thoughts. One act of sin is rebellion against God, and includes in it the contempt of his majesty, the contradiction of his holiness, which is his peculiar glory, the denial of his omniscience and omnipresence, as if he were confined to the heavens, and busied in regulating the harmonious order of the stars, and did not observe what is done here below. And there is in it a defiance of his eternal power, and a provoking him to jealousy, as if we were stronger than he. O, what a dishonour is it to the God of glory, that proud dust should flee in his face, and controul his authority! What a horrid provocation is it to the Most High, that the reasonable creature, that is naturally and necessarily a subject, should despise the divine law and Lawgiver? From this it appears that sin is an infinite evil. There is in it a concurrence of impiety, ingratitude, perfidiousness, and whatever may enhance a crime to an excess of wickedness. Now, sin being an infinite evil, the punishment of it must also be infinite; and because a creature is not able to bear a punishment infinite in degree, by reason of its finite and limited nature, therefore it must be infinite in its duration. And for this cause the punishment of the damned shall never have an end. The almighty power of God will continue them in their being, but they will curse and blaspheme that support, which shall be given them only to perpetuate their torments; and ten thousand times wish that God would destroy them once for all, and that they might for ever shrink away into nothing. But that will never be granted to them. No; they shall not have so much as the comfort of dying, nor shall they escape the vengeance of God by annihilation.

4. Their punishment must be eternal: for they will remain for ever unqualified for the least favour. The damned are not changed in hell, but continue their hatred and blasphemies against God. The seeds of this are in obstinate sinners here in the world, who are styled *haters of God:* but in the damned this hatred is direct and explicit; the fever is heightened into a phrenzy. The glorious and ever-blessed God is the object of their curses and eternal aversion. Our Lord tells us, that in hell 'there is weeping and gnashing of teeth,' *i. e.* extreme sorrow and extreme fury. Despair and rage are the proper passions of lost souls. For when the guilty sufferers are so weak, that they cannot by patience endure their torments, nor by strength resist the power that inflicts them, and withal are wicked and stubborn, they are enraged and irritated by their misery, and foam out blasphemies against the righteous Judge.

We may apply to this purpose what is said of the worshippers of the beast, Rev. xvi. 10, 11. 'They gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.' The torment and blasphemies of these impenitent idolaters are a true representation of the state of the damned. Now, as they will always sin; so they must always suffer. On these accounts, then, it is agreeable to the wisdom and justice of God that their pains and torments be eternal.

But now it is time to shut up this point with a few inferences.

1. It is inconsistent with the nature of God to let sin go unpunished; or, vindictive justice is essential to God. To clear this, consider,

(1.) This is evident from the light of nature. For that God is just, is strongly and deeply stamped upon the minds of the children of men. Hence, when the barbarians saw the viper fasten upon Paul's hand, they cried out that vengeance pursued him as a murderer, Acts xxviii. 4. The very instinct of nature told them, that there was a connection between guilt and punishment. To deny God to be just, is to offer violence to the principles of nature, to put a lie upon those notions which are born with and impressed upon our reason. It is to condemn conscience as a cheat, and all the terrors thereof as a false alarm. In a word, it is to eradicate all religion, and to open a flood-gate to all wickedness and impiety.

(2.) This appears from scripture assertions and examples. [1.] Consider scripture examples and declarations, such as Rev. xvi. 5. 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged, Rom. ii. 5. —'The righteous judgment of God,' 2 Thess. i. 6. 'It is a righteous thing with God to recompence with tribulation,' Heb. ii. 2. 'Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward,' Heb. xii. 29. 'Our God is a consuming fire,' Rom. i. 32. 'Knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Compare Gen. xviii. 25. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' [2.] Think upon scripture-examples, with respect to this matter. The angels, the flower and glory of the creation, the first-born of intelligent beings, when they revolted from their Maker, were doomed and cast into hell, where they lie reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the last day. Our first parents, and in them all their posterity, because of their apostasy, were sentenced to death and misery. The old world, except eight persons, were swept off the face of the earth, by a devouring deluge, on account of their impiety. Sodom and Gomorrah were by fire from heaven consumed to ashes, because of their vile uncleanness. The Egyptians sunk under multiplied

plagues, because they hardened themselves against the Lord, and would not let Israel go. Yea, the Israelites themselves met with many severe judgments in the wilderness, in Canaan, and in Babylon, because they rebelled against the Lord their God. In a word, this people at last, for murdering the Messiah, and rejecting the gospel, were destroyed with a great destruction at the siege of Jerusalem, where eleven thousand perished by sword, famine, and pestilence, and very near a hundred thousand more were carried away captive.

3. This appears from the nature of God, which carries in it the utmost detestation of sin; and this necessarily produces punishment. 'Upon the wicked God will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest,' Psal. xi. 6. Now the reason of all this holy severity is given in the very next verse, 'For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness.' His holy nature prompts him to love righteousness, and consequently to hate and punish all unrighteousness.

(4.) It is evident from the nature of sin. What is sin but the offering of the highest indignity to the infinite and Supreme Being, the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of mankind? It is an affronting of all his perfections, a reflection upon his wisdom, a contempt of his power, an insult to his holiness, a disparagement of his goodness, and an open defiance to his truth and faithfulness. If then sin be such an evil, an evil infinitely worse than we are capable to represent it, how can any imagine that God will forbear or neglect to punish such who obstinately live and die in the practice of it?

(5.) This will appear, if ye consider God as a Governor and Lawgiver. For his authority as such can never be preserved and maintained, if there be an universal impunity of criminal offences. Rebellion against Heaven would spread far and wide, devils and wicked men would grow absolutely unruly, the Divine Majesty and dominion would become contemptible, and his glorious sovereignty would be rendered vile and despicable, if bold offenders were not severely checked and punished for their enormities.

(6.) Consider, that if vindictive justice be not essential to God, it will be very hard, if not impossible, to give any tolerable account of the death and sufferings of Christ.

1. Is God infinitely just? Then there is a judgment to come. The justice of God requires that men should reap according to what they have sown; that it should be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. But it is not apparently so now in this present world. Here things are out of course; sin is rampant, and runs with a rapid violence. Many times the most guilty sinners are not

His goodness was the cause that he made any thing, and his wisdom was the cause that he made every thing in order and harmony. Here the goodness of God shines with a glorious lustre. All the varieties of the creatures which he hath made are so many beams and apparitions of his goodness. It was great goodness to communicate being to some things without himself, and to extract such a multitude of things from the depths of nothing, and to give life and breath to some of these creatures. Divine goodness formed their natures, beautified and adorned them with their several ornaments and perfections, whereby every thing was enabled to act for the good of the common world. Every creature hath a character of divine goodness upon it. The whole world is a map to represent, and a herald to proclaim, this amiable perfection of God. But the goodness of God is manifested especially in the creation of man. He raised him from the dust by his almighty power, and placed him in a more sublime condition, and endued him with choicer prerogatives, than the rest of the creatures. What is man's soul and body but like a cabinet curiously carved, with a rich and precious gem inclosed in it! God hath made him an abridgment of the whole creation: the links of the two worlds, heaven and earth, are united in him. He communicates with the earth in the dust of his body, and he participates with the heavens in the crystal of his soul. He has the life of angels in his reason, and that of animals in his sense. Further, the divine goodness is manifested in making man after his image, in furnishing the world with so many creatures for his use, in giving him dominion over the works of his hands, and making him lord of this lower world.

2. In our redemption by Jesus Christ. O what astonishing goodness was it for the great and glorious God to give his only begotten Son to the death for such vile rebels and enemies as we all are by nature! The goodness of God, under the name of his love, is rendered as the only cause of our redemption by Christ, John iii. 16. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' This is an inexpressible *so*, a *so* that all the angels of heaven cannot analyse. None can conceive or understand the boundless extent and dimensions of it. God gave Christ for us to commend his love, and set it off with an admirable lustre. 'God commended his love towards us (saith the apostle), in that while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us.' O what an expensive goodness and love was this! Our redemption cost God more than what was laid out on the whole creation. 'The redemption of the soul is precious,' says the Psalmist. 'We are not redeemed with corruptible things,

such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.' Here God parted with his richest jewel, and with the eternal delight of his soul. This cost Christ dear. The Sun of righteousness behoved to be eclipsed, and must vail the beams of his divine glory. He made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness of sinful flesh. He did not appear in worldly pomp and magnificence, attended with a splendid retinue, and faring deliciously, but in a mean and low condition, without a settled dwelling-place, and was exposed to poverty and reproach. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. The last scene of his life was most painful. Upon the very apprehension of his last sufferings it is said, 'he began to be sorrowful,' as if he had been a stranger to grief till then. He endured with unparalleled patience all that wrath and misery that his people deserved to have suffered for ever in hell. O what a dreadful deluge of wrath and fiery indignation fell from heaven upon our ark, of which that of Noah was only but a type! He was bruised and ground to powder as it were in his agony in the garden. O how did his innocent soul boil under the fire of divine wrath! His blood brake through every pore of the vessel, by the extremity of that flame. God spared not his own Son, but dealt with him in extreme severity. He paid the utmost mite of satisfaction for his people's sins that justice could demand. O what admirable love and goodness is manifested here!

3. In his providential conduct and government. Here we must distinguish a twofold goodness of God, common and special.

(1.) There is God's common goodness, which is common to all the creatures. 'God is good to all,' says the Psalmist. All the creatures taste of his goodness. He preserves them in their beings, continues the species of all things, concurs with them in their distinct offices, and quickens the womb of nature. 'O Lord, thou preservest man and beast,' says David. He visits us every day and makes us feel the effects of his goodness, in 'giving us rain and fruitful seasons,' and filling our hearts with food and gladness. He waters the ground with his showers, and every day shines with new beams of his goodness.

(2.) There is a special goodness of God to his own people, whom he privileges with spiritual and saving blessings. His goodness to them is truly wonderful, in pardoning their iniquities, healing their spiritual diseases, sanctifying their natures, hearing and answering their prayers, bearing with their infirmities, accepting their imperfect services, supporting them under and delivering them from

temptations, solving their doubts, directing and guiding them in their difficulties.

4. The goodness of God will be most signally manifested at the last day. It is laid up in heaven, Psal. xxxi. 19. O who can tell how great goodness is laid up there? In heaven they shall have draughts of his goodness, even as much as they can hold. There God will be all in all to them, and communicate himself to them immediately, without the intervention of ordinances.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. God is a merciful God, and delights in mercy, 'His tender mercies are over all his works,' Psal. cxlv. 9. There can be no case so bad as to be above or beyond the reach of mercy, to such as come to him in his own way, Isa. lv. 7. seeing his goodness is infinite. The difference between the goodness and mercy of God is, that mercy respects only the miserable, but goodness extends to the happy also.

Object. But how is the severity of God against the wicked, and the godly too, consistent with that infinite goodness?

Ans. It is the property of goodness to hate and punish sin. Hence the Lord said to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 19. 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.' Compare chap. xxxiv. 7. 'Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' The afflictions of the godly are the effect of the divine goodness, and effect goodness in them. Hence says the apostle, Heb. xii. 6. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' And says the psalmist, Psal. cxix. 71. 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.'

2. God can fully satisfy the desire of the soul, and in him it may rest with complacency and delight. He is all-sufficient in and to himself, and all his creatures. And this bountiful God should be the centre of our affections, desires, and joys. We should be restless and uneasy till we find him, and earnestly long for the rich manifestations of his love and grace.

3. This doctrine of the divine goodness should strongly recommend to us those hard lessons prescribed by our Lord, and which he urges upon his followers from the consideration of his own goodness and beneficence, Mat. v. 44, 45. 'Love your enemies,' &c.

4. Abuse not the divine goodness. This is a great evil, and it is very frequent and common. It began in the first ages of the world,

yea, it commenced a few minutes after the creation, and it continues to this very day. O abuse not the goodness of God, by forgetting his benefits, murmuring and repining at your lot and situation in the world, or by taking liberty to sin because of his goodness.

5. Seek not your happiness in created things and enjoyments, but in an ever-bountiful God, who is the spring and source of all goodness and mercy, and who can fully satisfy all the desires of an immortal soul.

Seventhly, The last communicable attribute of God to be taken notice of is his *truth*, which is that perfection of his nature whereby he is faithful, and free from all falsehood. Hence he is called 'the God that cannot lie,' Tit. i. 2. He is true in himself, Deut. xxxii. 4. 'A God of truth, and without iniquity.' Now God is true,

1. In his works both of creation and providence; and that both in his common and more ordinary works of providence, in preserving and governing the creatures; and extraordinary ones, such as the glorious work of redemption, his great and miraculous operations, and the wonderful preservations of and deliverances granted to his church and people when exposed to the greatest dangers. God is true in all these; as Psal. cxi. 7, 8, 'The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.' Psal. xxv. 10. 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.' It is a part of the church's song, Rev. xv. 3. 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Rev. xvi. 7. 'Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.' All God's works are true and real things, not chimeras or appearances. He executes true judgments, grants true deliverances, works true miracles; his mercies are true mercies, and his comforts are true comforts. He does not deceive or delude his people with vain shews and appearances.

2. In his word. His word is most pure truth. 'Thy word is truth,' says our Saviour, John xvii. 17. And,

(1.) God is true in all the doctrines which he hath revealed. There is no flaw nor corruption in any of them. They are all the true form of sound words. And especially he is true in the doctrines of the gospel. Hence we read of the 'truth of the gospel,' Gal. ii. 5; and the gospel is called 'the word of truth,' Eph. i. 13. Some of the doctrines revealed there are above the reach of human reason, as the doctrines of the glorious and adorable Trinity, the union of the two natures in the person of Christ, and the mystical union between him and believers. But though they cannot be comprehended by reason, they are not contrary to it.

(2.) In the historical narratives which he hath recorded in his word, as those of the creation, the fall of man, the drowning of the old world with the deluge, the incarnation of Christ, the many miracles which he wrought, his life and bloody death, &c. In these and other historical relations which we have in the word of God, there is no lie nor mistake at all. Hence Luke says, in his preface to his history, chap. i. 3, 4. 'It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightst know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.'

(3.) In his prophetical predictions. None of them fail or come short of their accomplishment, but are all fulfilled in their season. A man may foretel such things as depend on natural causes, as rain and snow, heat and cold, the eclipses of the sun and moon, &c. But things are foretold in the scriptures which are merely contingent, depending upon the free grace of God, or the free will of man, as the rejecting of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, &c. None of its predictions have fallen to the ground. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his words shall not pass away. The Lord tells the prophet, 'The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie,' Hab. ii. 3. And after divers prophetical predictions, it is said, Rev. xxii. 6. 'These sayings are faithful and true.'

(4.) In his commands. All his commands are faithful, and his law is truth. All his precepts which he has given us are counterparts of his own heart, real copies of his approving will. The matter of them is exactly consonant to his holiness, and most acceptable and well-pleasing in his sight. God approves of all that he commands: so that his precepts are a true and perfect rule of holiness, without any flaw or defect.

(5.) In his threatenings. They are always accomplished in their season; not one of them shall fail. Says the Lord to the Jews, by the prophet, Zech. i. 6. 'Did not my word take hold of your fathers?' And the apostle Paul tells us, Rom. ii. 2. 'We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.' It is true, indeed, some threatenings are conditional, and to be understood with the exception of repentance; so that unfeigned repentance and reformation prevent the execution of them; as is clear in the case of Nineveh, and from Jer. xviii. 7, 8. 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto

them.' But divine threatenings will surely be executed upon impenitent and incorrigible sinners.

(6.) In his promises. All the promises are *yea* and *amen*, *i. e.* there shall be an infallible accomplishment of them. Therefore promised blessings are called *sure mercies*, Is. lv. 3. And the gospel, which is the compend of all the promises, is often called *the word of truth*. God's people have found the truth of the promises many times in their comfortable experience. Says Joshua to the Israelites, Joshua xxiii. 14. 'Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' Joshua was now about to die, and therefore could not be supposed to feign and dissemble; and he appeals to their own consciences, 'Ye know,' &c. And Solomon speaks to the same purpose, 1 Kings viii. 56. 'Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.' All the promises which he hath made to his people shall have their accomplishment in due time. Now, the truth of God is most frequently taken in this sense in scripture, and in this his faithfulness doth peculiarly consist. And,

[1.] This truth and faithfulness of God shines with peculiar lustre in accomplishing the many promises recorded in the holy scriptures; such as that made to Abraham concerning his seed, that, after their sojourning in a strange land four hundred and thirty years, they should come out again with great substance; which was punctually fulfilled, as Moses tells us, Exod. xii. 41. 'And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.' Such also was the accomplishment of the promise relating to the return of the Israelites from the Babylonish captivity after seventy years. No length of time nor distance of place can wear the remembrance of his promise from the divine mind. 'He remembered his holy promise,' says the Psalmist, 'and Abraham his servant,' Psal. cv. 42.

[2.] In accomplishing the promises concerning the Messiah. So it is said, *Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;* grace in regard of our pardon, and truth in regard of the promise of God. This appears in performing the promise of Christ's incarnation after so many revolutions of time, and many expectations of his coming, and many contrary appearances, and long stay of four thousand years after the first promise. After all this, God made good his word, by

sending his Son into the world.—It appears in performing the promise of his death and sufferings. God passed his word to the church, that his Son should suffer death and the wrath of God for elect sinners. And having once passed his word for this, he would not spare him. Rather than God should break his word, his own dear Son must suffer a painful, shameful, and cursed death in his body, and the wrath of God in his innocent soul.—It appears in performing the promise of his resurrection from the dead. God had said, *he would not leave his soul in hell.* [the state of the dead], *nor suffer his holy One to see corruption.* This prophecy and promise was accordingly fulfilled: for he was raised from the dead in solemn triumph. Angels attended his resurrection, and the earth trembled and shook, as a sign of triumph and a token of victory; by which Christ intimated to the whole world, that he had overcome death in his own dominions, and lifted up his head as a glorious conqueror over all his enemies. It was promised that he should rise from the dead on the third day; and this was made good to a tittle.

(3.) In fulfilling his promises, when great difficulties and seeming improbabilities lay in the way of their accomplishment. Thus God promised to give Abraham a son, and he made it good, though Sarah was barren, and both Abraham and she were past age. Again, he brought back the captives from Babylon, though the thing seemed most improbable, and many great difficulties lay in the way. Difficulties are for men, not for God. 'Is any thing too hard for Jehovah?' Gen. xviii. 14. See Zech. viii. 6. He is not tied to the road of human probabilities. He will turn nature upside-down, rather than not be as good as his word.

(4.) In fulfilling promises to his people, when their hopes and expectations have been given up. See instances, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. Isa. xlix. 14. There may be much unbelief in good men, their faith may be sorely staggered. Yet God is faithful and true. Men may question his promise, but God cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13.

(5.) God's truth and faithfulness in keeping promise is confirmed by testimonies given to it by the saints in all ages. They have all set to their seal that God is true. They have all borne witness for God, and attested his unspotted faithfulness to the generations that were to come. See instances, Deut. vii. 9. Josh. xxiii. 14. 1 Kings viii. 56. Psal. cxlvi. 6. All learned men are for experiments: now, the saints in all ages have made experiments upon God's word of promise, and have always found him to be true and faithful. 'The word of the Lord is tried,' says the Psalmist. None that relied on his promise were ever disappointed.

We may here also take a short view of the grounds of God's

faithfulness. There are divers glorious attributes and perfections of the divine nature, upon which his truth and faithfulness in keeping promise is built, as so many strong and unshaken pillars. As,

1. His perfect knowledge of all things past. His knowledge is called 'a book of remembrance,' Mal. iii. 16. to signify the continual presence of all things past before him. Men do often break their word, because they forget their promise; but forgetfulness cannot befal a God of infinite knowledge. He will ever be mindful of his covenant, and remember his holy covenant and promises, as the Psalmist speaks.

2. His immutability. Though men in making promises may have a real purpose to perform them, yet they may afterwards change their mind. But God is always firm to his purpose, and cannot change his mind, because of his unchangeable nature. Mal. iii. 6. Jam. i. 17. Again men are often inconsiderate in making promises, and do often meet with what they did not foresee, but all events are eternally foreseen by God. So all his promises are made with infinite wisdom and judgment. To this purpose is that promise, Hos. ii. 19. 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.'

3. His power. Whatsoever he hath promised to his people, he is able to perform it. Sometimes men falsify their promise, and cannot make good their word through a defect of power. But God never out-promised himself. He can do whatsoever he pleased to do. It is said, Psal. cxxxv. 6. 'Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth,' &c. Yea, all things are possible with God. This was the foundation of Abraham's faith, which kept it from staggering at the thoughts of the improbabilities which lay in the way of the accomplishment of the promises, Rom. iv. 21. In the case of civil debts, many a man cannot keep his promise, because others break to him. But though the whole creation should break, God is as able as ever. Hence the prophet says, Hab. iii. 17, 18. 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Believers in Christ can never be undone, though the whole creation should disband and go into ruin.

4. His holiness. Some men are so wicked and malicious, that though they can yet they will not keep their word. But it is not so with God. He cannot be charged with any wickedness; for there is no unrighteousness in him, Psal. xcii. 15. by reason of the perfect

holiness of his nature. It is impossible for him to lie. The deceitfulness and treachery that is to be found in men, flows from the corruption that is lodged in their hearts: but the divine nature is infinitely pure and holy. 'God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' Numb. xxiii. 19.

5. His justice and righteousness. A man by virtue of a promise hath a right to the thing promised; so that it is his due; and justice requires to give every one his due. So God by his promise makes himself a debtor, and his justice obliges him to pay. Hence it is said, 1 John i. 9. 'God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' He is faithful to pardon, as he hath promised it; and faithful in keeping promise, because he is just. Though it was his goodness and mercy to make the promise, yet his justice binds him to make it good. It is true, when God makes himself a debtor by his promise, it is indeed a debt of grace; yet it is a debt which it is just for God to pay. Therefore his word of promise is called 'the word of his righteousness,' Psal. cxix. 123.

6. The glory and honour of his name may give us full assurance of his faithfulness in making good his promises. He doth all things for his own glory; and therefore, wherever you find a promise, the honour of God is given as security for the performance of it. Hence his people plead this as a mighty argument to work for them. So Joshua, chap. vii. 9. 'What wilt thou do unto thy great name?' *q. d.* 'O Lord, thy honour is a thousand times more valuable than our lives. It is of little importance what become of us. But, O! it is of infinite importance that the glory of thy name be secured, and thy faithfulness kept pure and unspotted in the world.' We find Moses pleading to the same purpose, Exod. xxxii. 11, 12. 'Lord why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people;' *q. d.* 'It will be sad enough for the hands of the Egyptians to fall upon thy people; but infinitely worse for the tongues of the Egyptians to fall upon thy name.' In a word, the glory of all God's attributes is engaged for the performance of his promises, especially his faithfulness and power. Now, these are strong pillars upon which God's truth and faithfulness in keeping promise is built. He can as soon cease to be omniscient, unchangeable, omnipotent, infinitely just and holy,

as he can cease to be true and faithful. He can as soon divest himself of his glory, and draw an eternal veil over all the shining perfections and excellencies of his nature, as cease to be faithful and true.

But it is high time to finish this subject.

Inf. 1. Is God infinitely true? Then all hypocrisy and dissimulation, all falsehood and dishonesty, all lying, cheating, and double-dealing, is most hateful to God, is most opposite to his holy nature, and flows from the devil and our lusts, as father and mother to them, John viii. 44.

2. This lets us see what a sure foundation we have for our faith in believing the truth of what is revealed in the holy scriptures; for they are the word of the God of truth, the word of God that cannot lie. The truth of God is an immoveable rock, upon which we may safely venture our salvation. The public faith of heaven is engaged for the happiness of believers; and can they ever have better security? The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power; and shall not our faith hang upon the word of God's truth? There is nothing else we can rest upon, but the truth and faithfulness of God. We cannot trust in an arm of flesh, for this will fail us in the time of our need; nor can we trust in our own hearts, for the Spirit of God tells us that he that doth so is a fool. All other things are sandy foundations, which cannot abide the storm and trial: but the truth of God is an immoveable rock that cannot be shaken.

3. Hence we see that the reformed Protestant religion is the only true religion that is in the world, because it is built upon the infallible truth and veracity of God. We have reason to be thankful to God, that it is not built upon such sandy foundations as human unwritten traditions, or any human testimony whatsoever. It is built upon the God of truth, and not upon fallible men. We admit the testimony of the church as an help to our faith, but not as the ground and foundation of it. The precious truths which we believe, we receive them not upon the testimony of the churches, Popes, or councils, but upon the testimony of the God of truth that cannot lie. But the Popish religion hath no sure foundation. The faith of Papists is built upon the testimony of men; so that their religion hath no more certainty in it, than these men have of infallibility.

4. Hence we may see matter of dreadful terror to all the wicked; for all the threatenings and curses of the law of a faithful God stand in full force against them, and will at last overwhelm them with rapid fury, if they do not fly to the mercy and grace of God, as manifested in Jesus Christ, who by his obedience unto death satisfied all the demands of law and justice, in the room of all who

will take the benefit of his undertaking. Though in their atheistical unbelief they may bless themselves, saying, that they shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their hearts, to add drunkenness unto thirst; yet the Lord will not spare them, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy will smoke against them, and all the curses that are written in his holy book shall light upon them; yea his wrathful vengeance, like an overflowing scourge, shall sweep them off the sinful stage of time into the depths of the devouring pit, where is nothing but weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

5. *Lastly*, Imitate God in this his adorable perfection, by 'speaking the truth in love,' Eph. iv. 15. Let the strictest rules of truth and sincerity be observed by you in all your dealings and intercourse with men. Lay aside all lying, falsehood, and dissimulation, all equivocations and secret reservations in your words and promises, and speak the truth every man with his neighbour.

Thus we have given you a short description of what God is. Imperfect it is, and imperfect it must be, seeing he is incomprehensible. Do ye study to believe what is taught you of God, and apply to him, through the Son of his love, for further discoveries of his glorious perfections and excellencies; and at length ye shall see him as he is, having a more enlarged and extensive knowledge of him, his nature and ways; though even then ye will not be able to comprehend him. For it was a wise and judicious answer of one that was asked, What God is? that if he knew that fully, he should be a God himself. And indeed that being which we can comprehend, cannot be God, because he is infinite. O study God and ye will increase in the knowledge of him.

OF THE UNITY OF GOD.

DEUT. vi. 4.—*Hear, O Israel, the* LORD *our God is one* LORD.
1 COR. viii. 4.—*We know that there is none other God but one.*
COMPARE JER. x. 10.—*But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God.*

WE have, in several preceding discourses, been endeavouring a little to explain the description of God that is given in our shorter Catechism, agreeable to the holy scriptures; and although it has been very imperfect, seeing it is but little of God we can know here; yet I hope what has been said upon it will tend to your instruction, and establishment in the faith, I now proceed to the next question, relating to the unity of God; which we have very clearly and strongly confirmed by the three passages of scripture which I have read.

In the first of these texts there are two things which we are taught to believe concerning God. (1.) That he is JEHOVAH, a being infinitely and eternally perfect, self-existent, and self-sufficient. (2.) That he is the one only God. Let us therefore have no other, nor desire to have any other. Some have thought that in this text there is a plain intimation of the Trinity of Persons in the unity of the Godhead; for here the name of God is thrice mentioned, and yet all declared to be but one. Happy they who have this one Lord for their God; for they have but one master to please, and but one benefactor to seek to.

In the second text the unity of God is also clearly asserted: *There is none other God but one.*

The third text presents us with a very amiable representation of God. (1.) *As the true God.* He is not a counterfeit and a mere pretender to divinity, as idols are; but he is really what he has revealed himself to be. He is one upon whom we may depend, and in whom and by whom we cannot be deceived. (2.) *As the living God.* He is life itself, has life in himself, and is the fountain of life to all the creatures. The gods of the heathen are dead things, worthless and useless; but ours is the living God and hath immortality.

From the three passages of scripture compared together, the following doctrine natively arises, viz.

DOCT. 'There is but one only, the living and true God.'

In discoursing this point, I shall shew,

I. Why God is called *the living God.*

II. Why he is called *the true God.*

III. That there is but *one God.*

IV. Deduce some inferences.

I. I am to shew why God is called *the living God.*

1. He is called *the living God,* in opposition to, and to distinguish him from dead idols, Psal. cxv. 4, 5, 6. 1 Thess. i. 9. These were but dead and lifeless things, stocks and stones, silver and gold, which the heathen nations did worship, neglecting the God that made the heavens and the earth. In this respect these idols were viler than the matter of which they were made, as the tree when in the ground had some life, but they had none.

2. Because God is the fountain of life, having all life in himself, John v. 26, and giving life to all things else. All life is in him and from him. (1.) Natural life, Acts xvii. 28. 'For in him we live.' 1 Tim. vi. 13. 'Who quickeneth all things.' (2.) Spiritual life, Eph. ii. 1. 'You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.' (3.) Eternal life, Col. iii. 4. 'Christ is our life.' His giving of these to the creatures proves that they are in him, though in a more eminent way; for nothing can give what it has not.

II. I proceed to shew why he is called *the true God.*

He is so called to distinguish him from all false or fictitious gods. Hence the apostle speaks of the Thessalonians having 'turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God,' 1 Thess. i. 9. And says the prophet, Jer. x. 11. 'The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.' The heathens, besides their worship of dead idols, worshipped also living creatures, Deut. xxxii. 17. 'They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up.' They were only gods in their blinded opinion and foolish fancy, not in reality; no more than the picture of a man, mistaken for a man, is a true man.

There is a twofold truth. (1.) Of fidelity or faithfulness. Thus God is true, that is, faithful, as was before explained. But that is not the truth here meant. (2.) A truth of essence, whereby a thing really is, and does not exist in opinion only. Thus the greatest liar is a true man; that is, he is really a man. It is in this sense that truth is attributed to God here. And the meaning is, that there is a true God, and but one true God. That there is a true God, or that truly and really there is a God, may be clearly demonstrated against atheists, by the light of nature, seeing they refuse scripture-testimony.

1. The works of creation and providence declare that there is a God. The heavens, earth, sea, air, and all that in them is, evidently proclaim their Maker to be divine. Look to the heaven, and be-

hold how it is adorned with sun, moon, and stars. How wisely are these heavenly bodies situated with respect to us! Were they nearer, they would scorch and burn up the earth; were they placed at a greater distance, the earth would be bound with perpetual frost, and so be quite barren. How regularly do these heavenly bodies move, making night and day, summer and winter, in so orderly a manner, that these revolutions have never once ceased! If we consider the earth, we shall find it hang as a ball or globe in the air, yet its foundation immoveable, though hung upon nothing. How is it adorned with trees, flowers, corns, &c. and all things necessary for the use of man and beast! And what an instance of divine wisdom is it, that all things are not found in every place, that so commerce betwixt man and man may be advanced, and correspondence be established betwixt different and distant nations, in the reciprocal exchange of the commodities peculiar to each country! Are there not in these the brightest traces of order and symmetry, that point out a God as the former and preserver of them all? But let us look to man, that abridgement of the world, where the prints of a Divine Being appear in the brightest colours. The composition of his body, and the powers of his soul, may convince you of the existence of a Deity. For who but a God could unite such different substances, an immaterial spirit with an earthly body? who could distinguish so many parts, assign to them their situation, form, and temperature, with an absolute fitness for those uses to which they serve? Well may we say with the apostle, Acts xvii. 27, 28. 'He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.' We may find him in the activity of our hands, in the beauty of our eyes, and in the vivacity of our senses. And to look inward, who hath endued the soul with such distinct and admirable faculties; the understanding, which exercises an empire over all things, compounds the most disagreeing, and divides the most intimate, by the lowest effects ascends to the highest cause; the will, which with such vigour pursues that which we esteem amiable and good, and recoils with aversion from that which we judge paining and evil; the memory, which preserves fresh and lively images of those things which are committed to its charge? Certainly then there is a God who made us.

As these things have a being, it leads us to the being of a God: for these things cannot be eternal; for then their being would be a necessary being, and so not capable of alteration or destruction. If they had a beginning, they had it from another: then that must either have had it from itself, or another, and so on till we come to the first cause, which is God. For nothing can give itself a being,

because so it should be and not be at one and the same time. And the order speaks out infinite wisdom that has so ruled and disposed all; or else it must be attributed to chance; which is far more absurd than to say that a most beautiful fabric was made by the fortuitous concourse of stones, timber, lime, &c. which is shocking to common sense.

2. Conscience tells men there is a God. It may be observed how it stirs up to duty, though the powers of the world would forbid it under the highest pains; it comforts a man after duty is performed, though he be persecuted for it. It condemns and stings a man for sin, even for secret sins unknown to any in the world, and that even where there is no hazard at all from that quarter. These are terrors that no art can pluck up, nor any force quell; and when men are going out of the world, are most lively and pungent, even when their judgment is most clear, and free from the clouds and the prejudices of passions. How could these things be, if there were not a God, who by an omnipotent hand has planted conscience in their bosoms, as his own vicegerent, that stings them when none sees them? Athiests may, with as much hope of success, attempt to pull the sun, moon, and stars out of heaven, as to eradicate these innate impressions of a Supreme Divine Being.

3. The universal and perpetual consent of all nations in this matter, evinces that there is a God. That must needs be a natural truth, that in all ages, all nations, however different in all other things, have yet held that there is a God, so that they would rather worship any thing than not have some God. Go back to ancient times; ask your fathers and they will tell you, your forefathers and your most ancient ancestors, and they will declare unto you, both that there is a God, and what he did in their days, and in the old times before them. Nay, inquire of the nations round about you, Spain and Turkey, the barbarous Tartars, the wild Africans, and the ignorant Americans, and they will all with one mouth confess this undeniable truth, That there is a God. This is an universal dictate of nature, spread as far and wide as reason and mankind are on the face of the earth. Some were called atheists among the heathens, not because they owned no God, but because they disowned their false gods. And if their have been any speculative atheists, that is, such who have been at all times thoroughly persuaded that that there is no Supreme Divine Being, they have been still looked on as monsters of men, and prodigies in nature, which have been universally abhorred as pests of society, and enemies to mankind. But the truth is, whatever advances men may make towards atheism in their depraved judgments, yet it is absolutely impossible to get the notion of a Deity rooted quite out of the soul.

Let not the athiest (if such a creature can possibly exist in a human form) pretend, that this universal belief of a divine existence which has obtained in the world, is the product of a successful political device, contrived by its crafty governors to keep it in awe and subjection to themselves. For as this is nothing but a cunning insinuation to support the worst of causes, so it is absolutely unaccountable how this device should be so prevalent as to gain ground in the consciences of men, and exercise such an uncontroulable empire over them. Is it possible that a few crafty men should so impose upon all the world, and they should never be, and, for any thing can be seen, shall never be able to free themselves from the fraud?

4. *Lastly*, Will ye consider the multitude of miracles which have occurred in the world. If these wonders of nature which we call miracles be nothing else but a mere lie and forgery, how comes the world to be so generally imposed on? How comes not only the Jewish but the Christian religion to be confirmed and ratified in such a firm manner as they have been amongst men? But if it be true that nature's bonds are sometimes broken, that the ordinary methods of things and actions are crossed, and turned quite another way; if ever the sun stood still, or the angels were seen on an embassy from heaven; if ever God appeared in a flaming bush, and talked with man from the clouds; if ever sin was punished with a shower of fire and brimstone from heaven; in a word, if ever diseases were cured by a touch, and the dead raised to life by prayer: I say, if all these things be true, then answer me, Who is so able and so bold thus to transgress all the laws and bands of nature? Certainly it can be no other than God.

III. I come now to shew that there is but *one God*. There are gods many, and lords many, in title and the opinion of men; but there is only one true God, having no fellow or competitor. This great and important truth I shall endeavour to confirm, both from scripture and reason.

1. The scripture is very express and pointed on this head: Deut. vi. 4. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' 'Isa. xliv. 6. 'I am the first, and the last, and besides me there is no God.' Mark xii. 32. 'There is one God, and there is none other but he.' Consult also the following passages, which clearly establish this article, viz. 1 Sam. ii. 2. Psal. xviii. 31. Isa. xlvi. 9. 1 Cor. viii. 4. 6.

2. This truth is clear from reason.

(1.) There can be but one First Cause, which hath its being of itself, and gave being to all other things, and on which all other

beings depend, and that is God: for one such is sufficient for the production, preservation, and government of all things: and therefore more are superfluous, for there is no need of them at all. Certainly he that made the world can preserve, govern, and guide it, without the assistance of any other God; for if he needed any assistance, he were not God himself, an infinitely perfect and all-sufficient being. And whatever power, wisdom, or other requisite perfections can be imagined to be in many gods, for making, preserving, and governing the world, all these are in one infinitely-perfect being. Therefore it is useless to feign many, seeing one is sufficient.

(2.) There can be but one infinite being, and therefore there is but one God. Two infinites imply a contradiction. Seeing God fills heaven and earth with his presence, and is infinite in all the perfections and excellencies of his nature, there can be no place for another infinite to subsist.

(3.) There can be but one Independent Being, and therefore but one God. [1.] There can be but one independent in being: for if there were more gods, either one of them would be the cause and author of being to the rest, and then that one would be the only God: or none of them would be the cause and author of being to the rest, and so none of them would be God; because none of them would be independent, or the fountain of being to all. [2.] There can be but one independent in working. For if there were more independent beings, then in those things wherein they will and act freely, they might will and act contrary things, and so oppose and hinder one another: so that being equal in power, nothing would be done by either of them. Yea, though we should suppose a plurality of gods agreeing in all things, yet seeing their mutual consent and agreement would be necessary to every action, it plainly appears, that each of them would necessarily depend on the rest in his operations; and so none of them would be God, because not absolutely independent.

(4.) There can be but one Omnipotent. For if there were two omnipotent beings, then the one is able to do whatsoever he will, and yet the other is able to resist and hinder him. And if the one cannot hinder the other, then that other is not omnipotent. Again, we must conceive two such beings, either as agreeing, and so the one would be superfluous; or as disagreeing, and so all would be brought to confusion, or nothing would be done at all; for that which the one would do, the other would oppose and hinder; just like a ship with two pilots of equal power, where the one would be ever cross to the other; when the one would sail, the other would

cast anchor. Here would be a continual confusion, and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony of the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a plain argument, that there is but one only Omnipotent being that rules all.

(5.) The supposition of a plurality of gods is destructive to all true religion. For if there were more than one God, we would be obliged to worship and serve more than one. But this it is impossible for us to do; as will plainly appear, if ye consider what divine worship and service is. Religious worship and adoration must be performed with the whole man. This is what the divine eminence and excellency reqnires, that we love him with all our heart, soul and strength, and serve him with all the powers and faculties of our souls, and members of our bodies; and that our whole man, time, strength, and all we have, be entirely devoted to him alone. But this cannot be done to a plurality of gods. For in serving and worshipping a plurality, our hearts and strength, our time and talents, would be divided among them. To this purpose our Lord argues, Matth. vi. 24. 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Mammon is thought to be an idol, which the heathens reckoned to be the god of money and riches. Now, says Christ, you cannot serve them both; if you would have the Lord for your God, and serve him, you must renounce mammon. We cannot serve two gods or masters: if but one require our whole time and strength, we cannot serve the other.

6. If there might be more gods than one, nothing would hinder why there might not be one, or two, or three millions of them. No argument can be brought for a plurality of gods, suppose two or three, but what a man might, by parity of reason, make use of for ever so many. Hence it is, that when men have once begun to fancy a plurality of gods, they have been endless in such fancies and imaginations. To this purpose is that charge against the Jews, who in this conformed themselves very much to the nations round about them, 'According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah,' Jer. ii. 28. Varro reckons up three hundred gods whom the heathens worshipped, and Hesiod reckons about three thousand of them. Indeed, if we once begin to fancy more gods than one, where shall we make an end? So that the opinion or conception of a plurality of gods is most ridiculous and irrational.

And this should be observed against those who pretend, that the Father is the most high God, and that there is no most high God but one, yet that there is another true God, viz. Christ, who in

very deed, as to them, is but a mere man; yet they pretend he is the true God. Christ is God, and the true and most high God. But, in opposition to them, consider that to be a man and to be a God are opposite, and cannot be said of one in respect of one nature, Jer. xxxi. 3. Acts xiv. 15. Jer. x. 11.

I shall now shut up this subject with a few inferences.

1. Wo to atheists, then, whether they be such in heart or life; for their case is dreadful and desperate: and they shall sooner or later feel the heaviest strokes of the vengeance of that God whom they impiously deny, whether in opinion or by works. To dissuade from this fearful wickedness, consider,

(1.) That atheism is most irrational. It is great folly; and therefore the Psalmist saith, Psal. xiv. 1. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' It is contrary to the stream of universal reason; contrary to the natural dictates of the atheist's own soul; and contrary to the testimony of every creature. The atheist hath as many arguments against him as there are creatures in heaven and earth. Besides, it is most unreasonable for any man to hazard himself on this bottom in the denial of a God. May he not reason thus with himself, what if there be a God, for any thing that I know? then what a dreadful case will I be in when I find it so? If there be a God, and I fear and serve him, I gain a blessed and glorious eternity; but if there be no God, I lose nothing but my sordid lusts, by believing that there is one. Now, ought not reasonable creatures to argue thus with themselves? What a doleful meeting will there be between the God who is denied, and the atheist that denies him! He will meet with fearful reproaches on God's part, and with dreadful terrors on his own: all that he gains is but a liberty to sin here, and a certainty to suffer for it hereafter, if he be in an error, as undoubtedly he is.

(2.) Atheism is most impious. What horrid impiety is it for men to deny their Creator a being, without whose goodness they could have had none themselves? Nay, every atheist is a Deicide, a killer of God as much as in him lies. He aims at the destruction of his very being. The atheist says upon the matter, that God is unworthy of a being, and that it were well if the world were rid of him.

(3.) Atheism is of pernicious consequence both to others and to the atheist himself. To others: for (1.) It would root out the foundation of government, and demolish all order among men. The being of God is the great guard of the world: for it is the sense of a Deity, upon which all civil order in cities and kingdoms is founded. Without this, there is no tie upon the consciences of men to restrain them from the most attrocious impieties and villanies. A city of

atheists would be a heap of confusion. There could be no traffic nor commerce, if all the sacred bonds of it in the consciences of men were thus snapt asunder by denying the existence of God. (2.) It is introductive of all evil into the world. If you take away God, you take away conscience, and thereby all rules of good and evil. And how could any laws be made, when the measure and standard of them is removed? for all good laws are founded upon the dictates of conscience and reason, and upon common sentiments in human nature, which spring from a sense of God. So that if the foundation be destroyed, the whole superstructure must needs tumble down. A man might be a thief, a murderer, and an adulterer, and yet in a strict sense not be an offender. The worst of actions could not be evil, if a man were a god to himself. Where there is no sense of God, the bars are removed, and the flood gates of all impiety rush in upon mankind. The whole earth would be filled with violence, and all flesh would corrupt their way.

Again, atheism is pernicious to the atheist himself, who denys the being of God, or endeavours to erase all notions of the Deity out of his mind. What can he gain by this but a sordid pleasure, unworthy of a reasonable nature? And suppose there were no God, what can he lose but his fleshly lusts, by believing there is one? By believing and confessing a God, a man ventures no loss; but by denying him, he runs the most desperate hazard if there be one. For this exposes him to the most dreadful wrath and vengeance of God. If there be a hotter receptacle in hell than another, it will be reserved for the atheist, who strikes and fights against God's very being.

(4.) Atheists are worse than heathens: for they worshipped many gods, but these worship none at all. They preserved some notion of God in the world, but these would banish him from both heaven and earth. They degraded him, but these would destroy him. Yea, they are worse than the very devils: for the devils are under the dread of this truth, That God is. It is said they 'believe and tremble,' Jam. ii. 19. It is impossible for them to be atheists in opinion; for they feel there is a God by that sense of his wrath that torments them. There may be atheists in the church, but there are none in hell. Thus atheism is a most dreadful evil, most carefully to be guarded against.

Inf. 2. Seeing there is one only the living and true God, we owe the most perfect and unlimited obedience to his will. We are to obey the will of his command with readiness and alacrity; and submit to the will of his providence with the utmost cheerfulness, without fretting or murmuring.

Inf. 3. Is God one? then his children should live in unity, that they may be one as he is one. They should study to be one in judgment and opinion, one in affection, and one in practice. We should all live as the family of one God, carefully avoiding divisions, and whatever may tend to interrupt the communion of saints.

Inf. 4. Seeing God is one, he should be the centre of our affections, love, fear, delight, joy, &c. Deut. vi. 4, 5. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.'

I shall conclude all with a few directions.

1. Beware of such opinions as tend to atheism, and aim at the undermining of this supreme truth, that God is. There are many opinions which have a woful tendency this way. Such is that of denying the immortality of the soul. This is a stroke at a distance at the very being of God, who is the Supreme Spirit. There is an order among spirits; first, the souls of men, then angels, and then God. Now, these degrees of spirits are, as it were, a rail and fence about the sense we have of the being and majesty of God. And such as deny the immortality of the soul, strike at a distance at the eternity and existence of the Deity.

Another opinion is, that men of all religions shall be saved; so that it is no matter what religion a man be of, if he walk according to the principles of it, and be of a sober moral life. In these latter times some are grown weary of the Christian religion, and by an excess of charity betray their faith, and plead for the salvation of heathens, Turks, and infidels. But ye should remember, that, as there is but one God, and one heavenly Jerusalem, so there is but one faith, and one way by which men can come to the enjoyment of God there. Such libertine principles have a manifest tendency to shake people loose of all religion. To make many doors to heaven, as one says, is to widen the gates of hell.

Another opinion tending to atheism is, the denying of God's providence in the government of the world. Some make him an idle spectator of what is done here below, asserting that he is contented with his own blessedness and glory, and that whatever is without him is neither in his thoughts nor care. Many think that this world is but as a great clock or machine, which was set a-going at first by God, and afterwards left to its own motion. But if ye exempt any thing from the dominion of providence, then you will soon run into all manner of libertinism. If Satan and wicked men may do what they will, and God be only a looker-on, and not concerned with human affairs, then ye may worship the devil, lest he hurt you, and fear men though God be propitious to you.

2. Beware of indulging sin. When ye take a liberty to sin, and gratify your vile and sordid lusts, you will hate the law that forbids it; and this will lead you to a hatred of the Lawgiver; and hatred of God strikes against his very being. When once you allow yourselves an indulgence to sin, you will be apt to think, O that there were no God to punish me for my crimes! and would gladly persuade yourselves that there is none; and will think it your only game to do what ye can to root out the notions of God in your own minds, for your own quiet, that so ye may wallow in sin without remorse.

3. Prize and study the holy scriptures, for they shew clearly that there is a God. There are more clear marks and characters of a Deity stamped upon the holy scriptures than upon all the works of nature. Therefore converse much with them. By this means was Junius converted from atheism. His father perceiving him to be so atheistical, caused lay a Bible in every room, so that in whatsoever room he entered, a Bible haunted him; and he fancied it upbraided him thus: 'Wilt thou not read me, atheist? wilt thou not read me?' Whereupon he read it, and was thereby converted. I say then, study the holy scriptures, and in doing so, learn to submit your reason to divine revelation. For some men, neglecting the scriptures, and going forth in the pride of their own understandings, have at last disputed themselves into flat atheism.

4. Study God in the creatures as well as in the scriptures. The creatures were all made to be heralds of the divine glory, and his glorious being and perfections appear evidently in them. Hence saith the Psalmist, Psal. xix. 1—4. 'The heavens declare the glory of God? and the firmament sheweth his handy-work, day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.' The world is sometimes compared to a book, and sometimes to a preacher. The universe is like a great printed book, wherein God sets forth himself to our view; and the great diversity of creatures which are in it, are so many letters, out of which we may spell his name. And they all preach loudly unto us the glorious being and excellencies of God. And therefore the apostle tells us, Rom. i. 20. 'The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.' In the book of the creatures God hath written a part of the excellency of his name; and you should learn to read God wherever he hath made himself legible to you.

5. *Lastly*, Ye who are yet sinners, lying in your natural state of sin and misery, come unto God in Christ, and receive him as your God by faith, and so ye will be preserved from atheism. And ye who are believers in Christ, be often viewing God in your own experiences of him. Have you not often found God in the strengthening, reviving, and refreshing influences of his grace upon your souls? Have ye not had sweet manifestations of his love? Have you not had frequent refreshing tastes of his goodness, in pardoning your iniquities, hearing and answering your prayers, supplying your wants, and feasting your souls? The reviewing of such experiences will be a mighty preservative against atheism. Can you doubt of his being, when you have been so often revived, refreshed, and supported by him? The secret touches of God upon your hearts, and your inward converses with him, are to you a clearer evidence of the being of God, than all the works of nature.

OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

1 JOHN v. 7.—*For there are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.*

IN the 5th verse of this chapter, John lays down a fundamental article of the Christian faith, That Jesus is the Son of God; and brings in the witnesses of this truth, ver. 7. and 8. The text condescends on the divine heavenly witnesses. Where, consider,

1. Their number, *three*, viz. three persons.

2. Their names, *the Father*, *the Word*, that is, the Son, so called, because he reveals the Father's mind, and *the Holy Ghost*. And here is noted the order of their subsisting also.

3. The majesty and glory of these witnesses; they are *in heaven*, manifesting their glory there, and from it have borne record; which should make the inhabitants of the world to believe their testimony.

4. Their act: They *bear record* to this truth.

5. Their unity: They are *one*, one God; not only one in consent and agreement, but one thing, one substance, one essence.

The doctrine evidently arising from the words is,

DOCT. 'There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Explain the terms mentioned in the doctrine, *the Godhead*, and *a person*.

II. Shew that there are three persons in the Godhead.

III. Prove that these three are distinct persons.

IV. Demonstrate that these three persons are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

V. Evince the weight and importance of this article of the Christian faith.

VI. *Lastly*, Deduce a few inferences.

I. I am to explain the terms mentioned in the doctrine, *the Godhead*, and *a person*.

1. By *the Godhead* is meant the nature or essence of God, Acts xvii. 29, even as by *manhood* is understood the nature of man. Now the Godhead is but one, there being but one God.

2. A divine person, or a person in the Godhead, is the Godhead distinguished by personal properties, Heb. i. 3, where Christ the Son of God is called 'the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' For consider the Godhead as the fountain or principle of the Deity, so it is the first person; consider it as begotten of the Father, it is the second; and as proceeding from the Father and the Son, it is the third person.

II. Our next business is to shew that there are three persons in the Godhead. This is confirmed by the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament.

1. The Old Testament plainly holds forth a plurality of persons in the Godhead, Gen. i. 26. 'God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.' Chap. iii. 22. 'And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.' This cannot be understood of angels: for man is said to be created after the image of God, but never after the image of angels; and the temptation was, 'Ye shall be as gods,' not as angels. Nor must it be conceived, that God speaks so after the manner of kings; for that way of speaking is used rather to note modesty than royalty. But when God speaks so as to discover most of his royalty, he speaks in the singular number, as in the giving of the law, 'I am the Lord thy God.' This trinity of persons is also not obscurely mentioned in Psal. xxxiii. 6. 'By the Word of the Lord, or JEHOVAH, were the heavens made; and all the host of them, by the breath, or Spirit, of his mouth.' Here is mention made of *Jehovah the Word and the Spirit*, as jointly acting in the work of creation. Accordingly we find, that 'all things were made by the Word,' John i. 3. and that 'the Spirit garnished the heavens,' Job xxvi. 13. Nay, a Trinity of persons is mentioned, Isa. lxiii. where, besides that the Lord, or Jehovah, is three times spoken of, ver. 7. we read, of 'the angel of his presence,' which denotes two persons,

and 'his Spirit,' ver. 9, 10. So that it evidently appears, that the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed under the Old Testament.

2. The New Testament most plainly teaches this doctrine.

(1.) I begin with the text, where it is expressly asserted, *There are three that bear record*, &c. Here are three witnesses, and therefore three persons. Not three names of one person: for if a person have ever so many names, he is still but one witness. Not three Gods, but one.

(2.) In the baptism of Christ, Matth. iii. 16, 17. mention is made of the Father speaking in an audible voice, the Son in the human nature baptized by John, and the Holy Ghost appearing in the shape of a dove; plainly importing three divine persons.

(3.) This appears from our baptism, Matth. xxviii. 8, 19. 'Go ye and teach all nations baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' Observe the words, *in the name, not names;* which denotes, that these three are one God: and yet they are distinctly reckoned three in number, and so are three distinct persons.

(4.) It appears from the apostolical benediction, where all blessings are sought from the three persons distinctly mentioned, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.'

III. That these three are distinct persons, (for though they cannot be divided, yet they are distinguished), is evident. For the Son is distinct from the Father 'being the express image of his person,' Heb. i. 2.; and in John viii. 17, 18. he reckons his Father one witness and himself another. And that the Holy Ghost is distinct from both, appears from John xiv. 16, 17. 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of truth.' And the text is plain for the distinction of all the three. Now, they are distinguished by their order of subsisting, and their incommunicable personal properties. In respect of the order of subsistence, the Father is the first person, as the fountain of the Deity, having the foundation of personal subsistence in himself; the Son is the second person, and hath the foundation of personal subsistence from the Father; and the Holy Ghost is the third person, as having the foundation of personal subsistence from the Father and the Son. And so for their personal properties,

1. It is the personal property of the Father to beget the Son, Heb. i. 5, 6, 8. 'Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. And again, when he

bringeth in the first begotten into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.—But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' This cannot be ascribed either to the Son or Holy Ghost.

2. It is the property of the Son to be begotten of the Father, John i. 14. 18. 'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'

3. The property of the Holy Ghost is to proceed from the Father and the Son, John xv. 26. 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.' In Gal. iv. 6. he is called 'the Spirit of the Son;' and in Rom. viii. 9. 'the Spirit of Christ.' He is said to 'receive all things from Christ,' John xvi. 14, 15.; to be 'sent by him,' John xv. 26.: and to be 'sent by the Father in Christ's name,' John xiv. 26. All this plainly implies, that the Holy Spirit proceedeth both from the Father and the Son. This generation of the Son and Holy Ghost was from all eternity. For as God is from everlasting to everlasting, so must this generation and procession be: and to deny it, would be to deny the supreme and eternal Godhead of all the three glorious persons.

IV. I proceed to shew, that these three persons are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. To this end consider,

1. How express the text is, *These three are one.* When the apostle speaks of the unity of the earthly witnesses, ver. 8. he says, they 'agree in one,' acting in unity of consent or agreement only. But the heavenly witnesses are *one*, viz. in nature or essence. They are not only of a like nature or substance, but one and the same substance; and if so, they are and must be equal in all essential perfections, as power and glory.

2. There is but one true God, as was before proved, and there can be but one true God. Now, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are each of them the true God; and therefore they are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. And this I shall prove by scripture testimony.

First, That the Father is true God, none that acknowledge a God do deny. Divine worship and attributes are ascribed to him. But,

Secondly, That the Son is true God, appears if ye consider,

1. The scriptures expressly calls him *God*, Rom. ix. 5. John i. 1. Acts xx. 28.; 'the true God' 1 John v. 20.; 'the great God,' Tit. ii. 13.; the 'mighty God, Isa. ix. 6. 'Jehovah or Lord,' Mal.

iii. 1. which is a name proper to the true God only, Psal. lxxxiii. ult.

2. The attributes of God, which are one and the same with God himself, are ascribed to him; as eternity, Micah v. 2. 'Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting; independence and omnipotence, Rev. i. 8.—'The Almighty;' omnipresence, John iii. 13. where he is said to be 'in heaven,' when bodily on earth; and Matth. xxviii. 20. 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world:' omniscience, John xxi. 17. 'Lord thou knowest all things,' says Peter to him; and unchangeableness, Heb. i. 11, 12. 'They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.'

3. The works proper and peculiar to God are ascribed to him; as creation, John i. 3. 'All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.' Conservation of all things, Heb. i. 3.—'upholding all things by the word of his power.' Raising the dead by his own power, and at his own pleasure, John v. 21, 26. 'The Son quickeneth whom he will.' The Father 'hath given to the Son to have life in himself.' The saving of sinners, Hos. i. 7.—'I will save them by the Lord their God.' Compare chap. xiii. 4. 'in me is thine help.' Yea, whatsoever the Father doth, the Son doth likewise.

4. Divine worship is due to him, and therefore he is true God, Matth. iv. 10. The angels are commanded to 'worship him,' Heb. i. 8. All must give the same honour to him as to the Father, John v. 23. We must have faith in him, and they are blessed that believe in him, Psal. ii. 12. compare Jer. xvii. 5. We are to pray to him, Acts vii. 58.; and we are baptised in his name, Matth. xxviii. 19. Nay, he is expressly said to be 'equal with the Father,' Phil. ii. 6. and 'one with him.' John x. 30. Now, seeing God will 'not give his glory to another,' Isa. xlviii. 11. because he is true and cannot lie, and he is just, it follows, that though Christ be a distinct person, yet he is not a distinct God from his Father, but one God with him, the same in substance equal in power and glory. And it is no contradiction to this doctrine when Christ says, 'My Father is greater than I,' John xiv. 28.; for he is not speaking there of his nature as God, but of his mediatory office; and hence he is called the Father's 'servant,' Is. xlii. 1.

Thirdly, That the Holy Ghost is true God, or a divine person, appears, if ye consider,

1. The scripture expressly calls him God, Acts v. 3, 4. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Isa. vi. 9. compared with Acts xxviii. 25, 26. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2,

3. He is called 'Jehovah, or the Lord,' Num. xii. 6. compare 2 Pet. i. 21.

2. Divine attributes are ascribed to him; as omnipotence, he 'worketh all in all,' 1 Cor. xii. 6, 9, 10, 11.; omnipresence, Psal. cxxxix. 7.; and omniscience, 1 Cor. ii. 10.

3. Works peculiar to God are ascribed to him; as creation, Psal. xxxiii. 6; conservation, Psal. civ. 30.; working miracles, Matt. xii. 28.; raising the dead, Rom. viii. 11.; inspiring the prophets, 2 Tim. iii. 16. compare 2 Pet. i. 21.

4. Divine worship is due to him. We are baptised in his name, Matth. xxviii. 19.; we are to pray to him, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Acts iv. 23, 25. compare 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3.

Hence it appears,

1. That the Godhead is not divided, but that each of the three persons hath the one whole Godhead, or divine nature.

2. That it is sinful to imagine any inequality amongst the three divine persons, or to think one of them more honourable than another, seeing they are all one God.

V. I proceed to consider the weight and importance of this article. It is a fundamental article, the belief whereof is necessary to salvation. For those that are 'without God,' Eph. ii. 12. and 'have not the Father,' cannot be saved; but 'whoso denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father,' 1 John ii. 23. Those that are none of Christ's cannot be saved; but 'he that hath not the Spirit, is none of his,' Rom. viii. 9. None receive the Spirit but those that know him. John xiv. 17. This mystery of the Trinity is so interwoven with the whole of religion, that their can neither be any true faith, right worship, or obedience without it. For take away this doctrine, and the object of faith, worship, and obedience is changed; seeing the object of these declared in the scripture, is the three persons in the Godhead; and the scriptures know no other God. Where is faith, if this be taken away? John xvii. 3. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Here it is to be observed, that our Lord does not call the *Father only* the true God, exclusive of the other persons of the Trinity; but that he (including the other persons who all subsist in the same one undivided essence) is the *only true God*, in opposition to idols, falsely called gods. 1 John ii. 23. 'Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.' There is no more true worship or fellowship with God in it: 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father,' Eph. ii. 18. And there is no more obedience without it, John xv. 23. 'He that hateth me,' says Christ, 'hateth my Father also.'

John v. 23, 'He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.' We are debtors to the Spirit, to live after the Spirit, and are bound by baptism to the obedience of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. How much ought we to prize divine revelation, wherein we have a discovery of this incomprehensible mystery! This is a truth which nature's light could never have found out. It is above reason, though not contrary to it; for reason, though it could never have brought it to light, yet when it is discovered, it must needs yield to it; for as the judgment of sense must be corrected by reason, so the judgment of reason by faith.

2. See here that God whom you are to take for your God, to love, trust in, worship and obey, even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is that God who offers himself to you in the gospel, and whom you are to take for your God in Christ. This is that Father who elected a select company of sinners unto salvation; this is that Son that redeemed them unto God by his blood; and this is that Spirit that renews and sanctifies them, making them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

3. *Lastly*, Take this Father for your Father, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and be obedient children, if ye would be reckoned of his seed. Receive the Son, and slight him not. Give your consent to the gospel-offer, seeing it is your Maker that offers to be your husband. And grieve not the Holy Spirit, lest ye be found fighters against God.

OF THE DECREES OF GOD.

EPHES. i. 11.—*According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

THE apostle here gives an instance of the sovereign freedom of divine grace through Jesus Christ in the believing Jews.

1. There is here the high privilege they were advanced to, a right to the heavenly inheritance, which had been forfeited by the sin of man.

2. Through whom they had obtained it, *in him;* by virtue of the merits, the obedience and satisfaction of Christ.

3. Why they obtained it, while others had not. Not that they were more worthy than others, but because they were predestinated, elected, or fore-ordained to salvation, and all the means of it.

4. There is the certainty of the efficacy of predestination. It is *according to his purpose;* that is, his firm purpose and peremptory decree to bring such things to pass. And this certainly in particular is evinced by a general truth, *Who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.* Wherein we may notice.

(1.) God's effectual operation, *he worketh.* The word signifies to work powerfully and efficaciously, so as to overcome all contrary resistance, and all difficulties in the way; which is exactly God's way of working. And this working takes place in the works of creation and providence.

(2.) The manner how God works. The plan and scheme according to which his works are framed, is *the counsel of his will.* His will is his decree and intention; and it is called *the counsel of his will,* to denote the wisdom of his decrees, his most wise and free determination therein. As God's decree is an act of his will, and so most free, considered in relation to the creatures; so his decree and will are never without counsel; he willeth or decreeth things to be done with the greatest reason and judgment, most wisely as well as freely.

(3.) The object of his working after this manner, *all things.* This cannot be restricted to the blessings which the apostle had been speaking of immediately before, but must be understood of all things whatsoever, and of all their motions and actions as such; which therefore are the object of God's decrees.

The text plainly affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'God hath fore-ordained, according to the counsel of his own will, whatsoever comes to pass.'

Here I shall,

I. Explain the nature of a decree.

II. Consider the object of God's decrees.

III. Speak of the end of his decrees.

IV. Touch at their properties.

V. Make improvement.

I. I am to explain the nature of a decree. The text calls it *a purpose, a will.* For God to decree is to purpose and fore-ordain, to will and appoint that a thing shall be or not be. And such decrees must needs be granted, seeing God is absolutely perfect, and therefore nothing can come to pass without his will; seeing there is an absolute and necessary dependence of all things and persons on God as the first cause. But there is a vast difference betwixt the decrees of God and men; whereof this is the principal: Men's purposes or decrees are distinct from themselves, but the decrees of God are not distinct from himself. God's decrees are nothing else but God himself, who is one simple act; and they are many only in respect of their objects, not as they are in God; even as the one heat of the sun melts wax and hardens clay. To say otherwise is to derogate from the absolute simplicity of God, and to make him a compound being. It is also to derogate from his infinite perfection; for whatsoever is added to any thing argues a want, which is made up by the accession of that thing, and so introduces a change; but God is absolutely unchangeable. Neither could God's decrees be eternal, if it were not so; for there is nothing eternal but God.

II. I proceed to consider the object of God's decrees. This is whatsoever comes to pass. He *worketh all things*, says the text. God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass; and nothing comes to pass but what he has decreed to come to pass. We may consider the extent of the divine decree under the three following heads.

1. God has decreed the creation of all things that have a being.

2. He has decreed to rule and govern the creatures which he was to make.

3. He has decreed the eternal state of all his rational creatures.

First, God decreed to rear up this stately fabric of the world, the heavens and the earth, the sea and the land, with all the great variety of creatures which inhabit them. There are myriads of holy angels in heaven, cherubim and seraphim, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, angels and archangels. There are many shining luminaries in the firmament, the sun, and the moon, and innumerable glittering stars. There is a great variety of creatures on the earth, animals, plants, trees, and minerals, with various forms, shapes, colours, smells, virtues, and qualities. The sea is

inhabited by many creatures, Psal. civ. 25. Now, God decreed to make all these things, Rev. iv. 11. 'Thou hast created all things.'

Secondly, God hath decreed the government of all his creatures. He preserves and upholds them in their beings, and he guides and governs them in all their motions and actions. He is not only the general spring and origin of all the motions and actions of the creatures, but he appoints and orders them all immediately.

1. He has decreed all their motions and actions: 'For (says the apostle) of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.' Rom. xi. ult. This is clear from God's knowing all these things before they come to pass; which knowledge of them must needs be in the decree, upon which the coming to pass of all things depends.

Not only good things, but evil things fall within the compass of his holy decree. Evils of punishment are truly good, being the execution of justice, as it is good in a magistrate to punish evil-doers. God owns himself to be the author of these evils, Amos iii. 6. 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' And yet he has decreed the effecting of these. As for the evils of sin, these also fall within the compass of the decree of God, as is clear in the case of crucifying Christ, Acts ii. 23. 'Him (says the apostle to the Jews) being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.' And says the apostle, Acts iv. 27. 28. 'For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' This appears also in the case of Pharaoh refusing to let Israel go, and pursuing them when they had gone, whose heart God hardened, Exod. xiv. 4; and in the sin of Joseph's brethren in selling him into Egypt; of which Joseph says, Gen. xlv. 8. 'So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.' It is true, God decreed not the effecting of sin, for then he should have been the author of it, but he decreed the permission of sin. And though sin in itself is evil, yet God's permitting it is good, seeing he can bring good out of it; and it is just in him to permit it, where he is not bound to hinder it. Yet this is not a naked permission, whereby the thing may either come to pass or not, but such as infers a certainty of the event, so that in respect of the event the sin cannot but come to pass. Hence our Lord says, Matth. xviii. 7. 'Wo unto the world because of offences; for it must needs be that offences come.' And says the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 19. 'There must be heresies among you.' See also Acts iv. 27, 28. forecited.

2. And not only necessary things, as the burning of the fire, but the most free acts of the creature, and the most casual things, fall under the divine decree. Free acts, as Prov. xx. 1. 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.' To this purpose are the foresaid instances of the Jews, Pharoah, and Joseph's brethren.—The most casual, as in the case of the casual slaughter mentioned, Exod. xxi. 12, 13, and Deut. xix. 3. where mention is made of the Lord's delivering the person slain into the hands of the slayer, though he had no intention to slay him. Such also is the case of lots, Prov. xvi. 33. 'The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.' This holds also in the case of sparrows, and the hairs of the head falling, which cannot be done without God, Matth. x. 29, 30. And thus not only great things, but small things fall within the compass of the divine decree.

But more especially let us consider God's decrees with respect to the government of rational creatures. This we may take up in the following particulars.

1. God has decreed what kingdoms and monarchies should be on the earth, what princes and potentates should rule and govern them, and whether their government should be mild or tyrannical; how long each kingdom should continue, when they should have peace and when war, when prosperity and adversity. We find wonderful discoveries made to Daniel with respect to these things.

2. God has decreed every thing relating to the lot and condition of particular persons.

(1.) He has decreed the time and place of their birth, whether it should be under the law or gospel, in a land of light or darkness; whether among the savage Indians in America, or among the more polite and civilized people of Europe; whether among Mahometans, Papists, or Protestants. All this was decreed by the Lord, who 'hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation,' Acts xvii. 26.

(2.) He hath decreed every man's lot and condition, whether it shall be high or low, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, learned or unlearned. He hath determined the trade and employment they should follow, the particular business they should betake themselves to. Many times God's providence over-rules men's purposes and designs, for fulfilling his own counsels. Matters are sometimes strangely wheeled about, so that not what we or our parents designed, but what God hath purposed shall take place. Amos was meanly employed at first, but God designed him for a more honour-

able calling: he was taken from the office of a herdman, and gatherer of sycamore fruit, and invested with a commission to prophesy to the people of Israel, Amos vii. 14, 15. David followed the ewes, and it is like never raised his thoughts to higher things in the days of his youth; but God made him the royal shepherd of a better flock, Psal. lxxviii. 70, 71. The most part of the apostles were fishermen; but Christ called them to a more high and eminent station, even to be extraordinary officers in his church, and fishers of men.

(3.) God hath decreed what relations men shall have in the world. Their wives and children are appointed for them. Hence said Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 44. 'Let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed for my master's son.' That such a woman rather than any other, should be wife. to such a man, is by the appointment of Heaven. Men's children are also decreed by God. Hence said Eve, Gen. iv. 24. 'God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.' And says the Psalmist, Psal. cxxvii. 3. 'Lo children are the heritage of the Lord.' God determines the numbers and names of every man's children.

(4.) All the comforts of men's lives are under the divine appointment, both those temporal and spiritual. Hence says the prophet, Isa. xxvi. 1. 'We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.'

5. All men's afflictions are determined by a decree of Heaven, Micah vi. 9. 'Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' Such are public calamities and distresses, as war, famine and pestilence, all bodily pains and sickness, poverties and pinching straits, and whatever is grievous and afflictive to men. None of these spring out of the dust, or come by chance. The kind and nature of people's troubles, their measure and degree, time and season, continuance and duration, and all the circumstances of them, are determined, and weighed in the scale of his eternal counsel. Hence says the apostle, 1 Thess. iii. 3. 'No man should be moved by these afflictions: for you yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.'

(6.) The time of every man's life in the world is appointed. Hence says Job, chap. vii. 1. 'Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?' And says the same great man, chap. xiv. 5. 'His days are determined: and the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.' The term of our life is fixed and limited, our days are determined, and our months numbered. Hence David prays, Psal. xxxix. 4. 'Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am.' Our days are measured; they are as

the days of an hireling. As the hireling hath a set time to work in, so every man and woman hath an appointed time for acting and working in this world. We are all pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and in a little time we must go hence and be no more. We are here like men upon a stage to act our parts, and in a short time we must retire within the curtain of death, and others will come in our room. Our glass is continually running, and the day and hour in which it will run out is settled and fixed by the order of Heaven. We find in scripture that God hath often foretold the precise term of particular men's lives. He set a hundred and twenty years to those who lived in the old world before the flood came upon them, Gen. vi. 3. He foretold the time of Moses' life, of that of Jeroboam's son, of that of Ahaziah king of Israel, and of many others. All this was from his own decree and counsel.

Thirdly, God hath determined the eternal state of all his rational creatures, both men and angels. Our Confession of Faith tells us, agreeably to scripture, chap. iii. art. 3. that 'by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others are fore-ordained to everlasting death.' More particularly,

1. We read of the elect angels, 1 Tim. v. 21. The perseverance and standing of the holy angels in the state of their primitive integrity, and their confirmation therein, was determined by the purpose of God. In the morning of the creation heaven shined with innumerable glittering stars, the angels of light, of whom a vast number are, by their rebellion against God, become wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Now, the good angels are in a supernatural state, without the least danger of change, or any separation from the blessed presence of God in glory, flowing from the continual irradiations of divine grace, which preserves their minds from errors, and their wills from irregular desires; and consequently they cannot sin, nor forfeit their felicity.

It was by an eternal decree of God, that he passed by the angels that fell, and doomed them to everlasting misery. The apostle tells us, 2 Pet. ii. 4. that 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved into judgment.' And saith Jude, ver. 6. 'The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.' Mercy did not interpose to avert or suspend their judgment; but immediately they were expelled from the Divine Presence. Their present misery is insupportable, and worse awaits them. Their judgment is irreversible; they are

under the blackness of darkness for ever. They have not the least glimpse of hope to allay their sorrows, and no star-light to sweeten the horrors of their eternal night. It were a kind of mercy to them to be capable of death; but God will never be so far reconciled to them as to annihilate them. Immortality, which is the privilege of their nature, infinitely increases their torment.

2. God hath likewise appointed the final and eternal state of men and women. It is said, Rom. ix. 21, 22, 23. 'Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?'

(1.) He hath elected some to everlasting life by an irreversible decree, Rom. viii. 29, 30. 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Eph. i. 4. 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.' 2 Thess. ii. 13. 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.' From eternity God elected some from among the lost posterity of Adam to everlasting life and glory, according to the good pleasure of his own will. Therefore all is referred by our Saviour to the good pleasure of God, Matth. xi. 25, 26. And all the means for accomplishing the ends of election are likewise of divine appointment; particularly the redemption of ruined sinners by the death and sufferings of Christ: 'He hath chosen us in Christ,' Eph. i. 4. The Father did first, in the order of nature, chuse Christ to the Mediatory office, and as the chief corner-stone to bear up the whole building; whence he is called God's *elect*, Isa. xlii. 1. And then he chose a company of lost sinners to be saved by and through Christ; and therefore he is said to predestinate them to be conformed to the image of his Son.

2. God hath passed by the rest of mankind, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, and hath ordained them to dishonour and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice. Hence Christ is said to be 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to them that stumble at the word being disobedient: whereunto also they were

appointed,' 1 Pet. ii. 8. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour,' 2 Tim. ii. 19, 20. In Jude, ver. 4. we read of 'ungodly men, who were before of old ordained to condemnation.' And in Rom. ix. 22, 23. we read of 'vessels of mercy, which God had afore prepared unto glory: and of vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.'

III. I come to consider the end of God's decrees. And this is no other than his own glory. Every rational agent acts for an end; and God being the most perfect agent, and his glory the highest end, there can be no doubt but all his decrees are directed to that end. 'For—to him are all things,' Rom. xi. 36. 'That we should be to the praise of his glory,' Eph. i. 12. In all, he aims at his glory: and seeing he aims at it, he gets it even from the most sinful actions he has decreed to permit. Either the glory of his mercy or of his justice he draws therefrom. Infinite wisdom directs all to the end intended. More particularly,

1. This was God's end in the creation of the world. The divine perfections are admirably glorified here, not only in regard of the greatness of the effect, which comprehends the heavens and the earth, and all things therein; but in regard of the marvellous way of its production. For he made the vast universe without the concurrence of any material cause; he brought it forth from the womb of nothing by an act of his efficacious will. And as he began the creation by proceeding from nothing to real existence, so in forming the other parts he drew them from infirm and indisposed matter, as from a second nothing, that all his creatures might bear the signatures of infinite power. Thus he commanded light to arise out of darkness, and sensible creatures from an insensible element. The lustre of the divine glory appears eminently here. Hence says David, Psal. xix. 1. 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' They declare and manifest to the world the attributes and perfections of their great Creator, even in his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power. All the creatures have some prints of God stamped upon them, whereby they loudly proclaim and shew to the world his wisdom and goodness in framing them. Hence says Paul, Rom. i. 20. 'The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.'

2. The glory of God was his chief end and design in making men and angels. The rest of the creatures glorified God in an objective

way, as they are evidences and manifestations of his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power. But this higher rank of beings are endued with rational faculties, and so are capable to glorify God actively. Hence it is said, Prov. xvi. 4. 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' If all things were made for him, then man and angels especially, who are the master-pieces of the whole creation. We have our rise and being from the pure fountain of God's infinite power and goodness; and therefore we ought to run towards that again, till we empty all our faculties and excellencies into that same ocean of divine goodness.

3. This is likewise the end of election and predestination. For 'he hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children, to the praise of the glory of his grace.' That some are ordained to eternal life, and others passed by, and suffered to perish eternally in their sin, is for the manifestation of the infinite perfections and excellencies of God. The glory and beauty of the divine attributes is displayed here with a shining lustre; as his sovereign authority and dominion over all his creatures to dispose of them to what ends and purposes he pleaseth; his knowledge and omniscience, in beholding all things past, present, and to come; his vindictive justice, in ordaining punishments to men, as a just retribution for sin; and his omnipotence, in making good his word, and putting all his threatenings in execution. The glory of his goodness shines likewise here, in making choice of any, when all most justly deserved to be rejected. And his mercy shines here with an amiable lustre, in receiving and admitting all who believe in Jesus into his favour.

4. This was the end that God proposed in that great and astonishing work of redemption. In our redemption by Christ we have the fullest, clearest, and most delightful manifestation of the glory of God that ever was or shall be in this life. All the declarations and manifestations that we have of his glory in the works of creation and common providence, are but dim and obscure in comparison with what is here. Indeed the glory of his wisdom, power, and goodness, is clearly manifested in the works of creation. But the glory of his mercy and love had lain under an eternal eclipse without a Redeemer. God had in several ages of the world pitched upon particular seasons to manifest and discover one or other particular property of his nature. Thus his justice was declared in his drowning the old world with a deluge of water, and burning Sodom with fire from heaven. His truth and power were clearly manifested in freeing the Israelites from the Egyptian chains, and bringing them out from that miserable bondage. His truth was there illustriously displayed in performing a promise which had lain

dormant for the space of 430 years, and his power in quelling his implacable enemies by the meanest of his creatures. Again, the glory of one attribute is more seen in one work than in another: in some things there is more of his goodness, in other things more of his wisdom is seen, and in others more of his power. But in the work of redemption all his perfections and excellencies shine forth in their greatest glory. And this is the end that God proposed in their conversion and regeneration. Hence it is said, Isa. xliii. 21. 'This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.' Sinners are adopted into God's family, and made a royal priesthood on this very design,' 1 Pet. ii. 9.

IV. I come now to consider the properties of God's decrees.

1. They are eternal. God makes no decrees in time, but they were all from eternity. So the decree of election is said to have been 'before the foundation of the world,' Eph. i. 4. Yea whatever he doth in time, was decreed by him, seeing it was known to him before time, Acts xv. 18. 'Known unto God are all his works from the beginning.' And this foreknowledge is founded on the decree. If the divine decrees were not eternal, God would not be most perfect and unchangeable, but, like weak man, should take new counsels, and would be unable to tell every thing that were to come to pass.

2. They are most wise, 'according to the counsel of his will.' God cannot properly deliberate or take counsel, as men do; for he sees all things together and at once. And thus his decrees are made with perfect judgment, and laid in the depth of wisdom, Rom. xi. 33. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' So that nothing is determined that could have been better determined.

3. They are most free, *according to the counsel of his own will*; depending on no other, but all flowing from the mere pleasure of his own will, Rom. xi. 34. 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?' Whatsoever he decreeth to work without himself, is from his free choice. So his decrees are all absolute, and there are none of them conditional. He has made no decrees suspended on any condition without himself. Neither has he decreed any thing because he saw it would come to pass, or as that which would come to pass on such or such conditions; for then they should be no more according to the counsel of his will, but the creature's will. For God's decrees being eternal, cannot depend upon a condition which is temporal. They are the determinate counsels of God, but a conditional decree determines nothing. Such

conditional decrees are inconsistent with the infinite wisdom of God, and are in men only the effects of weakness; and they are inconsistent with the independency of God, making them depend on the creature.

4. They are unchangeable. They are the unalterable laws of heaven. God's decrees are constant; and he by no means alters his purpose, as men do, Psal. xxxiii. 11. 'The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.' Hence they are compared to mountains of brass, Zech. vi. 1. As nothing can escape his first view, so nothing can be added to his knowledge. Hence Balaam said, 'God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' Numb. xxiii. 19. The decree of election is irreversible: 'The foundation of God, (says the apostle), standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his,' 2 Tim. ii. 19.

5. They are most holy and pure. For as the sun darts its beams upon a dunghill, and yet is no way defiled by it; so God decrees the permission of sin, as above explained, yet is not the author of sin: 1 John i. 5. 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,' Jam. i. 13, 17. 'God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'

6. *Lastly*, They are effectual; that is, whatsoever God decrees comes to pass infallibly, Isa. xlvi. 10. 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.' He cannot fall short of what he has determined. Yet the liberty of second causes is not hereby taken away; for the decree of God offers no violence to the creature's will; as appears from the free and unforced actings of Joseph's brethren, Pharoah, the Jews that crucified Christ, &c. Nor does it take away the contingency of second causes, either in themselves or as to us, as appears by the lot cast into the lap. Nay they are thereby established, because he hath efficaciously foreordained that such effects shall follow on such causes.

Before proceeding to the application of this doctrine, it may not be improper to answer some objections which are brought against the doctrine of the divine decrees.

1. It is objected by some, that if all things that come to pass in time be appointed of God by an irreversible decree, then this seems to make God the author of sin, as if he had ordained that horrid and hateful evil to come into the world, which is so dishonourable to himself, and so destructive to the children of men. In answer to this, you must know,

1. That all sinful actions fall under the divine decree. Though sin itself flows from transgressing the law, yet the futurition of it is from the decree of God. No such thing could ever have been in the world, if it had not been determined by the eternal counsel of Heaven for a holy and just end. This is plainly asserted by the apostle Peter, with respect to the greatest villainy that was ever committed on the earth, namely, the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the hands of sinful men, Acts ii. 23. forecited. And the church gives this account of it, Acts iv. 27, 28. 'For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand, and thy counsel determined before to be done.' There was never such an atrocious crime or higher act of wickedness committed, than the murdering of the Lord of glory. And yet it appears from these texts of scripture, that, in this bloody and horrid scene, wicked men did no more than God's hand and counsel determined before to be done.

2. That the decree of God is properly distinguished into that which is effective, and that which is permissive.

(1.) His effective decree respects all the good that comes to pass, whether it be moral or natural goodness. All the actions and motions of the creatures have a natural goodness in them; and even sinful actions considered abstractly from any irregularity, obliquity, or deformity cleaving to them, have a natural goodness in them, so far as they are actions: they have a goodness of being considered purely and simply as actions. Now, God has decreed to effect all these, yea even sinful actions considered purely as natural. For he is the first and universal cause of all things, the fountain and original of all good. And it is said with respect to the oppressions of the church by wicked men, Psal. cxv. 3. 'Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased.'

(2.) His permissive decree doth only respect the irregularity and pravity that is in sinful actions. God decreed to permit the same, or he determined it to be, himself permitting it. Hence it is said, Acts xiv. 16. 'In times past he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.' And God doth nothing in time, but what he did from eternity decree to do. So that the futurition of sin is from the decree of God. God determined that it should be. He did not decree to have any efficiency in sin, considered as such; but he willed that it should be done, himself permitting it. The counsel of God did not determine to do it, but that it should be done.

3. God decreed the permission of sin for great and glorious ends.

It is true, sin in its own nature has no tendency to any good end. If it end in any good, it is from the overruling providence of God, and that infinite divine skill that can bring good out of evil, as well as light out of darkness. Now, the great and glorious end for which God decreed the after-being of sin, is his own glory: and the ends subordinate thereunto are not a few. Particularly, God decreed the futurition of sin, (1.) That he might have occasion of glorifying his infinite wisdom, love, and grace in the redemption and salvation of a company of lost sinners through the death and sufferings of his own dear Son. (2.) That his patience and long suffering in bearing with and forbearing sinners, might be magnified, admired, and adored. (3.) That he might be honoured and glorified by the faith and repentance of his people, and their walking humbly with him. (4.) That his justice might be illustriously displayed and glorified in the eternal damnation of reprobate sinners for their own sins and abominations, sin being the cause of their damnation, though not of their reprobation. Thus God decreed the futurition of sin for these holy and wise ends, that he might glorify his wisdom in bringing good out of so great an evil, and a greater good than the evil he decreed to permit.

4. The decree of God about the permission of sin does not infringe the liberty of man's will. For sin doth not follow the decree by a necessity of co-action or compulsion, which indeed would destroy human liberty; but by a necessity of infallibility, which is very consistent with it. It is sufficient unto human liberty, or the freedom of man's will, that a man act without all constraint, and out of choice. Now, this is not taken away by the decree. Men sin as freely as if there were no decree, and yet as infallibly as if there were no liberty. And men sin, not to fulfil God's decree, which is hid from them, but to serve and gratify their vile lusts and corrupt affections.

Object. 2. If God hath determined the precise number of every man's days by an unalterable decree, then the use of means for the preservation of our health and lives is altogether unnecessary; for nothing can frustrate the divine decree. We will certainly live as long as God hath appointed us, whether we use any means or not. And therefore when we are hungry, we need not eat and drink; and when we are sick, we need not take physic, or use any medicines.

In answer to this, you must know, that as God hath decreed the end, so he hath decreed the means that are proper for attaining that end; so that these two must not be separated. Though God hath decreed how long we shall live, yet seeing it is his ordinary way to work by means, and he hath commanded and enjoined the use of

them to men, therefore it is still our duty to use lawful means for preserving our life and health, and to wait on God in the due use of them, referring the event to his wise determination. In Paul's dangerous voyage to Rome, an angel of the Lord assured him, that God had given him all that sailed with him in the ship; and Paul assured them from the Lord, that there should be no loss of any of their lives: yet when some were about to flee out of the ship, he says to the centurion who had the command, 'Except these abide in the ship, you cannot be saved,' Acts xxvii. 31. And he exhorted them to take some meat after their long abstinence, telling them, that it was for their health. From which it plainly appears, that as God had decreed to save their lives, so he had decreed to save them in the due use of ordinary means; so that they were to use means for the preservation of their life and health. And when Hezekiah was recovered from a mortal disease, and received a promise from God that he should have fifteen years added to his days, and the promise was confirmed by a sign, the miraculous going back of the sun, he did not neglect or cast off the use of means: but, as was prescribed by the prophet, he applied a bunch of dried figs to his sore, and used still his ordinary diet. Therefore it is gross ignorance and madness in men to reason so against God's decrees. The Lord, by an unchangeable counsel and purpose, hath decreed and set down all things, and how they shall come to pass; and therefore it is a wrong way of arguing for people to say, If God hath determined how long I shall live, then I shall not die sooner, though I never eat or drink.

Object. 3. If God hath determined the eternal state and condition of men, whether they shall be happy or miserable for ever, then it is in vain to repent and believe, or use any means for their own safety. For if God hath elected them to salvation, they shall certainly be saved, whether they use any means or not; and if they are not elected to everlasting life, all that they can possibly do will be to no purpose at all, for they shall never be saved by it.

For answer to this, you must know,

1. That God's decree of election is a great secret, which we ought not to pry into. It is simply impossible for men to know whether they are elected or not, before they believe. Indeed, if a man were certain that he is not elected to eternal life, it would be another case: but as it is not certain that thou art elected, so it is not certain that thou art not elected. You have no means to know either the one or the other certainly, till you get saving faith. Till then the Lord reserves it in his own breast, as a secret which we are not to pry into. For it is said, Deut. xxix. 29. 'Secret things belong

unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children, that we may do all the things of his law.' Here the Lord shews what belongs to him and what belongs to us, and that we should mind our duty, and not busy and perplex ourselves about impertinencies. Whether men be elected or not elected, is a secret that God never discloses to an unbeliever; but that we should believe on Christ is no secret. This is a duty clearly revealed and enjoined by the gospel.

2. It is our duty to look to God's commands, and not to his decrees; to our own duty, and not to his purposes. The decrees of God are a vast ocean, into which many possibly have curiously pried to their own horror and despair; but few or none have ever pried into them to their own profit and satisfaction. Our election is not written in particular in the word of God; but our duty is plainly set down there. If men conscientiously perform their duty, this is the way to come to the knowledge of their election. Men therefore should not question whether they be elected or not, but first believe on Christ, and endeavour diligently to work out their own salvation; and if their works be good, and their obedience true, thereby they will come to a certain knowledge that they were elected and set apart to everlasting life.

3. As God elects to the end, so he elects also to the means. Now, faith and obedience are the means and way to salvation; and therefore, if you be elected to salvation, you are also elected to faith and obedience. See what is said to this purpose, 2 Thess. ii. 13. 'God hath chosen you to salvation,' there is the end; 'through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,' there is the means which lead to that end. Both are decreed by God. If therefore you heartily and sincerely believe and obey, then your election to salvation stands firm and sure. Nay, further, the scriptures make election to be terminated as well in obedience as salvation. So 1 Pet. i. 2. 'Elect (says the apostle) unto obedience, through sanctification of the Spirit.' In the former place it was, 'elect to salvation through sanctification;' but here it is, 'elect to obedience through sanctification;' to denote unto us, that none are elected unto salvation but those that are elected unto obedience. And therefore it is unreasonable, yea, it is contradictory to say, if I am elected, I shall be saved, whether I believe and obey or not; for none are elected to salvation but through faith and obedience.

4. Men do not pry into the decrees of God in other things, but do what they know to be incumbent upon them as their duty. And certainly it is as unreasonable here. When you are dangerously sick, and the physician tells you, that unless you take such and such

medicines, your case is desperate; you do not use to reason thus, Then if God hath decreed my recovery, I will certainly be restored to my health, whether I take that course of physic or not; but you presently fall in with the advice given you, and make use of the means prescribed for your health. And will you not do so here? You are dangerously sick and mortally wounded with sin, and God commands you to flee to Christ the only physician that can cure you, and cast yourselves upon him, and you shall certainly be saved. But O, says the sinner, if I knew that God had decreed my salvation, I would venture on Christ; but till once I know this, I must not believe: O how unreasonable is unbelief! The devil's suggestions make poor creatures act as if they were entirely distracted and out of their wits. This is just as if an Israelite stung with the fiery serpents should have said, If I knew that the Lord had decreed my cure, I would look upon the brazen serpent, and if he hath decreed it, I will certainly recover whether I look to it or not. If all the stung Israelites had been thus resolved, it is likely they had all perished. Or this is as if one pursued by the avenger of blood, should have set himself down in the way to the city of refuge, where he should have been flying for his life, and said, If God hath decreed my escape, then I will be safe whether I run to the city of refuge or not; but if he hath not decreed it, then it is in vain for me to go thither. Now, would not men count this a wilful casting away of his life, with a careless neglect of that provision which God hath made to save it? Was it not sufficient that a way was made for his escape, and a way feasible enough, the city of refuge being always open? Thus the arms of Christ are always open to receive and embrace poor humbled perishing sinners fleeing to him for help. And will men destroy themselves by suffering Satan to entangle them with a needless, impertinent, and unreasonable scruple? In other cases, if there be no way but one, and any encouraging probability to draw men into it, they run into it without delay, not perplexing and discouraging themselves with the decrees of God. Now, this is thy case, O sinner; Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; there is no other by whom you can be saved; flee to him then as for thy life; and let not Satan hinder thee, by diverting thee to impossibilities and impertinencies. Comply with the call and offer of the gospel. This is present and pertinent duty, and trouble not thyself about the secrets of God.

I conclude all with a few inferences.

1. Has God decreed all things that come to pass? Then there is nothing that falls out by chance, nor are we to ascribe what we meet with either to good or ill luck and fortune. There are many

events in the world which men look upon as mere accidents, yet all these come by the counsel and appointment of Heaven. Solomon tells us, Prov. xvi. 33. that 'the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is from the Lord.' However casual and fortuitous things may be with respect to us, yet they are all determined and directed by the Lord. When that man drew a bow at a venture, 1 Kings xxii. 34. it was merely accidental with respect to him, yet it was God that guided the motion of the arrow so as to smite the king of Israel rather than any other man. Nothing then comes to pass, however casual and uncertain it may seem to be, but what was decreed by God.

2. Hence we see God's certain knowledge of all things that happen in the world, seeing his knowledge is founded on his decree. As he sees all things possible in the glass of his own power, so he sees all things to come in the glass of his own will; of his effecting will, if he hath decreed to produce them; and of his permitting will, if he hath decreed to suffer them. Hence his declaration of things to come is founded on his appointing them, Isa. xliv. 7. 'Who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming and shall come? let them shew unto them.' He foreknows the most necessary things according to the course of nature, because he decreed that such effects should proceed from and necessarily follow such and such causes: and he knows all future contingents, all things which shall fall out by chance, and the most free actions of rational creatures, because he decreed that such things should come to pass contingently or freely, according to the nature of second causes. So that what is casual or contingent with respect to us, is certain and necessary in regard of God.

3. Whoever be the instruments of any good to us, of whatever sort, we must look above them, and eye the hand and counsel of God in it, which is the first spring, and be duly thankful to God for it. And whatever evil of crosses or afflictions befals us, we must look above the instruments of it to God. Affliction doth not rise out of the dust or come to men by chance; but it is the Lord that sends it, and we should own and reverence his hand in it. So did David in the day of his extreme distress. 2 Sam. xvi. 11. 'Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.' We should be patient under whatever distress befals us, considering that God is our party, Job ii. 10. 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' This would be a happy means to still our quarrelings at adverse dispensations. Hence David says, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it,' Psal. xxxix. 9.

4. See here the evil of murmuring and complaining at our lot in the world. How apt are ye to quarrel with God, as if he were in the wrong when his dealings with you are not according to your own desires and wishes? You demand a reason, and call God to an account, Why am I thus? why so much afflicted and distressed? why so long afflicted? and why such an affliction rather than another? why am I so poor and another so rich? Thus your hearts rise up against God. But you should remember, that this is to defame the counsels of infinite wisdom, as if God had not ordered your affairs wisely enough in his eternal counsel. We find the Lord reproving Job for this, chap. xl. 2. 'shall he that contendeth with the Lord instruct him?' When ye murmur and repine under cross and afflictive dispensations, this is a presuming to instruct God how to deal with you, and to reprove him as if he were in the wrong. Yea, there is a kind of implicit blasphemy in it, as if you had more wisdom and justice to dispose of your lot, and to carve out your own portion in the world. This is upon the matter the language of such a disposition, Had I been on God's counsel, I had ordered this matter better; things had not been with me as now they are. O presume not to correct the infinite wisdom of God, seeing he has decreed all things most wisely and judiciously.

5. There is no reason for people to excuse their sins and falls, from the doctrine of the divine decrees. Wicked men, when they commit some villainy or atrocious crime, are apt to plead thus for their excuse, Who can help it? God would have it so; it was appointed for me before I was born, so that I could not avoid it. This is a horrid abuse of the divine decrees, as if they did constrain men to sin: Whereas the decree is an immanent act of God, and so can have no influence, physical or moral upon the wills of men, but leaves them to the liberty and free choice of their own hearts; and what sinners do, they do most freely and of choice. It is a horrid and detestable wickedness to cast the blame of your sin upon God's decree. This is to charge your villainy upon him, as if he were the author of it. It is great folly to cast your sins upon Satan who tempted you, or upon your neighbour who provoked you; but it is a far greater sin, nay horrid blasphemy, to cast it upon God himself. A greater affront than this cannot be offered to the infinite holiness of God.

6. *Lastly*, Let the people of God comfort themselves in all cases by this doctrine of the divine decrees; and, amidst whatever befals them, rest quietly and submissively in the bosom of God, considering that whatever comes or can come to pass, proceeds from the decree of their gracious friend and reconciled Father, who knows

what is best for them, and will make all things work together for their good. O what a sweet and pleasant life would ye have under the heaviest pressures of affliction, and what heavenly serenity and tranquillity of mind would you enjoy, would you cheerfully acquiesce in the good will and pleasure of God, and embrace every dispensation, how sharp soever it may be, because it is determined and appointed for you by the eternal counsel of his will!

OF THE WORK OF CREATION.

HEB. xi. 3.—*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

HAVING discoursed to you of the decrees of God, whereby he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, I come now to treat of the execution of these decrees. That question, 'How doth God execute his decrees?' being only an introduction to what follows, it is needless to insist on it. Only you must know, that for God to execute his decrees, is to bring to pass what he has decreed. Now, what God from all eternity decreed is brought to pass in the works of creation and providence. Nothing falls out in either of these but what was decreed; nor does it fall out in any other way than as it was decreed. The decrees of God are as it were the scheme, draught and pattern of the house; and the works of creation and providence are the house, built in every point conformable to the draught.

In the text we have an answer to that question, 'What is the work of creation?' Wherein, we may consider,

1. What we understand about it. (1.) The making of the world; it was *framed*, and had a beginning, not being from eternity. (2.) The author and efficient cause of it, God. (3.) What God made, *the worlds;* all things, heaven, earth, sea, air, &c. and all the inhabitants thereof, angels, men, cattle, fowls, fishes, &c. (4.) How they were made, *by the word of God*, that word of power which spake all things, into being. Or it may denote Jesus Christ, who is called *the word of God*, and by whom God *made the worlds*. (5.) Whereof they were made. This is declared negatively, *Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*, that is, not of pre-existent matter, but of nothing. By *things that are seen* may be understood visible corporeal things; and if these were made of nothing, much more things that are not seen. But I rather under-

stand it of all things which are seen to have a being; for that word relates to the eyes of the understanding, as well as of the body.

2. How we understand this creation of the world, *through faith*. Not that we can understand nothing of the creation by the light of nature; for the eternity of the world is contrary to reason as well as faith; but we have the full and certain knowledge of this work of creation in the particular circumstances of it, through faith assenting to divine revelation, and no other way.

In speaking to this work of creation I shall shew,

I. What we are to understand by creation.

II. That the world was made, or had a beginning.

III. Who made it.

IV. What God made.

V. Whereof all things were made.

VI. How they were made.

VII. In what space of time they were made.

VIII. For what end God made all things.

IX. In what case or condition he made them.

X. Deduce some inferences from the whole.

I. I am to show what we are to understand by creation, or what it is to create.

1. It is not to be taken here in a large sense, as sometimes it is used in scripture, for any production of things wherein second causes have their instrumentality; as when it is said, Psal. civ. 30. 'Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth.' Where the meaning is, thou sendest forth thy quickening power, which produceth life in the creatures from time to time: for the Psalmist speaks not here of the first creation, but of the continued and repeated production of living creatures, in which the divine power is the principal agent. But,

2. We are to take it strictly, for the production of things out of nothing, or the giving a being to things which had none before. And here you must know, that there is a twofold creation, one immediate, and the other mediate.

(1.) There is an immediate creation; as when things are brought forth out of pure nothing, where there was no pre-existent matter to work upon. Thus the heavens, the earth, the waters, and all the materials of inferior bodies, were made of nothing; and the souls of men are still produced from the womb of nothing by God's creative power, and infused into their bodies immediately by him, when they are fully organised to receive them.

(2.) There is a secondary and mediate creation, which is the making things of pre-existing matter, but of such as is naturally unfit

and altogether indisposed for such productions, and which could never by any power of second causes be brought into such a form. Thus all beasts, cattle, and creeping things, and the body of man, were at first made of the earth, and the dust of the ground; and the body of the first woman was made of a rib taken out of the man. Now, this was a creation as well as the former; because, though there was matter here to work upon, yet it could never have been reduced into such a form without the efficacy of Almighty power. We have an account of both these in the history of the creation. It is said, Gen. i. 1. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;' *i. e*, he made that mighty mass of matter out of nothing, which was at first a rude and indigested lump; for the earth was without form, and the heavens without light. And then by that same omnipotent power he reduced it into that beautiful order and disposition wherein it now appears to our view.

II. I go on to shew that the world was made, that it had a beginning and was not eternal. This the scripture plainly testifies, Gen. i. 1. above quoted. And this reason itself teacheth: for whatsoever is eternal, the being of it is necessary, and it is subject to no alteration. But we see this is not the case with the world; for it is daily undergoing alterations.

III. I am next to shew who made the world, and gave it a beginning. That was God and he only, Gen. i. 1. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' This will evidently appear from the following particulars.

1. The world could not make itself; for this would imply a horrid contradiction, namely, that the world was before it was; for the cause must always be before its effect. That which is not in being, can have no production; for nothing can act before it exists. As nothing hath no existence, so it hath no operation. There must therefore be something of real existence, to give a being to those things that are; and every second cause must be an effect of some other before it be a cause. To be and not to be at the same time, is a manifest contradiction, which would infallibly take place if any thing made itself. That which makes is always before that which is made, as is obvious to the most illiterate peasant. If the world were a creator, it must be before itself as a creature.

2. The production of the world could not be by chance. It was indeed the extravagant fancy of some ancient philosophers, that the original of the world was from a fortuitous concourse of atoms, which were in perpetual motion in an immense space, till at last a sufficient number of them met in such a happy conjunction as formed the universe in the beautiful order in which we now behold

it. But it is amazingly strange how such a wild opinion, which can never be reconciled with reason, could ever find any entertainment in a human mind. Can any man rationally conceive, that a confused rout of atoms, of diverse natures and forms, and some so far distant from others, should ever meet in such a fortunate manner, as to form an entire world, so vast in the bigness, so distinct in the order, so united in the diversities of natures, so regular in the variety of changes, and so beautiful in the whole composure? Such an extravagant fancy as this can only possess the thoughts of a disordered brain.

3. God created all things, the world, and all the creatures that belong to it. He attributes this work to himself, as one of the peculiar glories of his Deity, exclusive of all the creatures. So we read, Isa. xliv. 24. 'I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.' Chap. xlv. 12. 'I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.' Chap. xl. 12, 13. 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? Job ix. 8. 'Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.' These are magnificent descriptions of the creating power of God, and exceed every thing of the kind that hath been attempted by the pens of the greatest sages of antiquity.—By this operation God is distinguished from all the false gods and fictitious deities which the blinded nations adored, and shews himself to be the true God. Jer. x. 11. 12. 'The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.' Psal. xcvi. 5. 'All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.' Isa. xxxvii. 19. 'Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.' None could make the world but God, because creation is a work of infinite power, and could not be produced by any finite cause: For the distance between being and not being is truly infinite, which could not be removed by any finite agent, or the activity of all finite agents united.

This work of creation is common to all the three persons in the adorable Trinity. The Father is described in scripture as the

Creator, 1 Cor. viii. 6.—'The Father, of whom are all things.' The same prerogative belongs to the Son, John i. 3. 'All things were made by him (the Word, the Son); and without him was not any thing made that was made.' The same honour belongs to the Holy Ghost, as Job xxvi. 13. 'By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens.' Chap. xxxiii. 4. 'The Spirit of God hath made me (says Elihu), and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.' All the three persons are one God; God is the Creator; and therefore all the external works and acts of the one God must be common to the three persons. Hence, when the work of creation is ascribed to the Father, neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit are excluded; but because, as the Father is the fountain of the Deity, so he is the fountain of divine works. The Father created from himself by the Son and the Spirit; the Son from the Father by the Spirit; and the Spirit from the Father and the Son; the manner or order of their working being according to the order of their subsisting. The matter may be conceived thus: All the three persons being one God, possessed of the same infinite perfections; the Father, the first in subsistence, willed the work of creation to be done by his authority: 'He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.'—In respect of immediate operation, it peculiarly belonged to the Son. For 'the Father created all things by Jesus Christ,' Eph. iii. 9. And we are told, that 'all things were made by him,' John iii. 3. This work in regard of disposition and ornament, doth peculiarly belong to the Holy Ghost. So it is said, Gen. i. 2. 'The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,' to garnish and adorn the world, after the matter of it was formed. Thus it is also said, Job xxvi. 13. above cited, 'By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens.'

IV. Our next province is to shew what God made. All things whatsoever, besides God, were created, Rev. iv. 11. 'Thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' Col. i. 16. 'By him were all things created.' The evil of sin is no positive being, it being but a defect or want, and therefore is not reckoned among the things which God made, but owes its existence to the will of fallen angels and men. Devils being angels, are God's creatures; but God did not make them evil, or devils, but they made themselves so.

Those things that were made in the beginning were most properly created of God; but whatsoever is or will be produced in the world, is still made by God, not only in respect that the matter whereof they are made was created by him, but because he is the first cause of all things, without whom second causes could produce nothing;

and whatever power one creature has of producing another, is from God. Hence Elihu says, as above cited, 'The Spirit of God hath made me;' though he was produced by the operation of second causes. And it is worth while to consider what David says on this head, Psal. cxxxix. 13,—16. This clearly appears from the impotency of the creature to produce any thing according to nature, when God denies his concurrence. Hence we have a chain of causes described, Hos. ii. 21, 22. where God is the first cause, and acts the same part in all other operations wherein creatures are concerned: 'I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.' If it be asked, then, what did God make? I answer, he made every thing that has a being, this stately structure of the universe, and that vast variety of creatures that are in it, sin only excepted, which he permitted should take place, but had no hand in the effecting of it as such.

V. I proceed to shew of what all things were made. Of nothing; which does not denote any matter of which they were formed, but the term from which God brought them; when they had no being he gave them one. There was no pre-existent matter to make them of, nothing at all to work upon: for he 'made all things both visible and invisible,' Col. i. 16. Rom. xi. 36. If then he made all things, he must needs have made them of nothing, unless he would say there was, besides God, something before there was any thing, which is a palpable contradiction. To create is properly to make a thing of nothing, to make a thing have an existence that had none before. Thus were the heavens and the earth made of nothing simply; that is, they began to exist, which they never did before. This is what is called immediate creation, as I shewed on the first head. But there is a mediate creation, as I also noticed, which is a producing of things from matter altogether unfit for the work, and which could never be disposed, but by an almighty power to be such a thing. Thus man's body was created of the dust, and this itself was created of nothing, and was utterly unfit for producing such a work without a superior agency.

VI. The sixth head is to shew, how all things were made of nothing. By the word of God's power. It was the infinite power of God that gave them a being; which power was exerted in his word, not a word properly spoken, but an act of his will commanding them to be, Gen. i. 3. God said, 'Let there be light and there was light,' Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made. He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.' By his powerful word he called them from nothing to being, Rom. iv.

17. 'God calleth those things which be not as though they were.' This is a notable evidence of infinite power, which with so great easiness as the speaking of a word, could raise up this glorious fabric of the world. An heathen philosopher considered this as a striking instance of the sublime, peculiar to the books of the Jewish legislator.

VII. Our next business is to shew in what space of time the world was created. It was not done in a moment, but in the space of six days, as is clear from the narrative of Moses. It was as easy for God to have done it in one moment as in six days. But this method he took, that we might have that wisdom, goodness, and power that appeared in the work, distinctly before our eyes, and be stirred up to a particular and distinct consideration of these works, for commemoration of which a seventh day is appointed a sabbath of rest.

But although God did not make all things in one moment, yet we are to believe, that every particular work was done in a moment, seeing it was done by a word, or an act of the divine will, Psal. xxxiii. 9. forecited. No sooner was the divine will intimated, than the thing willed instantly took place.

In the space of these six days the angels were created; and it is not to be thought that they were brought into being before that period; for the scripture expressly asserts, that all things were created in that space, Exod. xx. 11. And though Moses, Gen. i. makes no express mention of the angels, yet, Gen. ii. 1. he shews that they were created in one of these six days, as he mentions the host of the heavens and the earth; and it is certain, that in the host of heaven the angels are included, 1 Kings xxii. 19. where Micaiah the prophet says, 'I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven (which can be no other than the angels) standing by him.'

The works of the first day were, (1.) The highest heaven, the seat of the blessed, and that with the angels its inhabitants, who in Job xxxviii. 4,—7. under the designation of 'morning stars and sons of God,' are said to have 'sang together, and shouted for joy,' when the foundations of the earth were laid, as being then made. (2.) The earth, that is, the mass of earth and water, which Moses says was without form and void; that is, without that beauty and order which it afterwards received, and destitute of inhabitants, and without furniture and use. (3.) The light, which was afterwards gathered together, and distributed into the body of the sun and stars.

The works of the second day were the firmament; that is, that expansion or vast space which extends itself from the surface of the earth to the utmost extremity of the visible heavens, which ver. 8.

is called *heaven*, that is, the ærial heavens, the habitation of birds and fowls, through which they wing their way. This vast extension is called the *firmament*, because it is fixed in its proper place, without which it cannot be removed without force and violence. Another work of this day was the dividing of the waters above the firmament, that is, the clouds, from the waters as yet mixed with the earth, which were afterwards gathered together into seas, rivers, lakes, fountains, &c.

On the third day, the lower waters were gathered into certain hollow places, which formed the sea; and the dry land appeared, adorned with plants, trees, and herbs, which continue to be produced to this day.

On the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars were made, to enlighten the world, and render it a beautiful place, which otherwise would have been an uncomfortable dungeon, and to distinguish the four seasons of the year.

On the fifth day, the fishes and fowls were made.

On the sixth day, all sorts of beasts, tame and wild, and creeping things were produced out of the earth; and last of all, man, male and female.

It is probable that the world was created in autumn, that season of the year in which generally things are brought to perfection for the use of man and beast. But this not being an article of faith, we need not insist upon it.

VIII. I come now to shew for what end God made all things. It was for his own glory, Prov. xvi. 4. 'The Lord hath made all things for himself,' Rom. xi. 36. 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' And there are these three attributes of God that especially shine forth in this work of creation, namely, his wisdom, power, and goodness.

1. His wisdom eminently appears, (1.) In that after the heavens and their inhabitants were created, those things that have only being and not life, then those that have being and life, but not sense, then those that have being, life, and sense, but not reason, and last of all, man, having being, life, sense, and reason, were successively formed. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.' (2.) In his appointing of every thing to its proper use, by the law of creation, Gen. i. Hence the wisdom of God is celebrated in that work, Jer. x. 12. 'He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.'

2. The power of God appeared, (1.) In creating all things by a word, which instantly produced the effect intended. (2.) In that he

created plants, herbs, and trees, before the sun, moon, and stars, which now naturally are the causes of the earth's producing its fruits; as also light before them, for discovering their beauty and verdure.

3. His goodness appears, in that he first prepared the place before he brought in the inhabitants, first provided the food before the living creatures were made, and adorned and fitted all for the use of man, before he formed him.

IX. If it is asked, 'In what state were all things made? I answer, They were all 'very good,' Gen. i. 31. The goodness of the creature consists in its fitness for the use for which it was made. In this respect every thing answered exactly the end of its creation. Again, the goodness of things is their perfection; and so every thing was made agreeable to the idea thereof that was formed in the divine mind. There was not the least blemish or defect in the work; but every thing was beautiful, as it was the effect of infinite wisdom as well as almighty power. And God being the end of all, even natural things tend to him. (1.) Declaring his glory in an objective way, Psal. xix. 1. (2.) Stirring us up to seek him, and behold him as our chief good and portion, Acts xvii. 26, 27. Rom. i. 20. (3.) Sustaining our life, and serving man, that he might serve God, for which he was made very fit, in regard of the rich endowments of his mind, all pure, holy, and upright, 1 Cor. x. 31. All the sin and misery that is now in the world, by which its beauty is greatly marred, its goodness defaced, and disorder and irregularity so universally prevail, proceeded from Satan, and man's yielding to his temptations.

I shall shut up this subject with a few inferences.

1. God is a most glorious being, infinitely lovely and desirable, possessed of every perfection and excellency. He made all things, and bestowed upon them all the perfections and amiable qualities with which they are invested. So that there is no perfection in any of the creatures which is not in him in an eminent way, Psal. xciv. 9. 'He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?' Whatever excellency and beauty is in the creatures, is all from him; and sure it must be most excellent in the fountain.

2. God's glory should be our chief end. And seeing whatever we have is from him, it should be used and employed for him: For 'all things were created by him and for him,' Col. i. 16. Have we a tongue? It should be employed for him, to shew forth his praise; hands? they should do and work for him; life? it should be employed in his service; talents and abilities? they should be laid out

for promoting his interest and honour; and, upon a proper call, we should be ready to suffer for him.

3. God is our Sovereign Lord Proprietor, and may do in us, on us, and by us, what he will: Rom. ix. 20, 21. 'Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?' There is no reason to murmur and fret under the cross, or any afflicting dispensations, that he exercises us with. Should he destroy that being that he gave us, to whom would he do wrong? As he gave it us freely, he may take it away, without any impeachment of his goodness and justice. May not God do with his own what he will?

4. We should use all the creatures we make use of with an eye to God, and due thankfulness to him, the giver; employing them for our use, and in our service, soberly and wisely, with hearts full of gratitude to our Divine Benefactor; considering they stand related to God as their Creator, and are the workmanship of his own hands. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. iv. 4. They are not to be used to his dishonour, or the feeding of our base lusts and irregular appetites, but to fit us for and strengthen us in the performance of our duty to him.

There is no case so desperate, but faith may get sure footing with respect to it in the power and word of God. Let the people of God be ever so low, they can never be lower than when they were not at all. Hence the Lord says, Isa. lxv. 18. 'Be glad and rejoice,' &c. He spoke a word and so the creature was made at first; and it will cost him but a word to make it over again. Hence Christ is called 'the beginning of the creation of God,' Rev. iii. 14. O seek to be new-made by him; that old things may pass away, and all things become new.

6. Give away yourselves to God through Jesus Christ, making an hearty, a cheerful, and an entire dedication and surrender of your souls and bodies, and all that ye are and have, to him as your God and Father, resolving to serve and obey him all the days of your life: that as he made you for his glory, you may in some measure answer the end of your creation, which is to shew forth his praise. Serve not sin or Satan any longer. God made you upright and holy; but Satan unmade you, stripping you of your highest glory and ornament. Relinquish his service, which is the basest drudgery and slavery, and will land all that are employed in it in hell at last: and engage in the service of God in Christ, which is truly honourable and glorious, and will be crowned with an everlasting

reward in the other world: for where he is, there shall his servants also be.

7. *Lastly*, This doctrine affords a ground of love, peace, justice and mercy betwixt men, which should be carefully cultivated by all that would desire to be with God for ever. For says the prophet, Mal. ii. 10. 'Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?' The consideration of being created by God, should be a powerful inducement to us to practise all the duties we owe to one another as men and Christians.

OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

GEN. i. 27.—*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.*

HAVING discoursed of the creation of all things out of nothing, and exhibited some of the displays of the admirable wisdom, power, and goodness of God apparent therein, I come now to speak of the creation of man, the masterpiece of the lower creation. In the text we have an answer to that question, 'How did God create man?' God only spake the word and then the other creatures were produced: but being to create man, he called a council of the Trinity for that end: whereby the excellency of man above the other creatures, who is a compend of the world, is clearly demonstrated. Here we have the execution of that council, *So God created man, &c.* For, as says Seneca, a heathen moralist, man is not a work huddled over in a haste, and done without great forethought and consideration; for man is the greatest and most stupendous work of God, even of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As the sacred historian had said before of the Creator, 'Let us make man in our image,' &c. so it is not for nought that he repeats the act of creating three times in this verse; in which also the us in the former verse is restrained to God; so that the plurality there spoken of is not God and angels, but the three persons, one God; for it was not angels, but God that created man. Man here signifies man and woman, male and female, Adam and Eve. Wherefore they are called *him* and *them;* for as they were originally one, God having made two of one by creation; so they two were made one again by marriage. And they were both made in one day, Gen. i. 26.—31.; and that in the image of God, which is twice repeated; the import whereof

seems to be, that man was made very like God. Whereas there is but a shadow and vestige of him in the inferior creatures, as we may read the name and perfections of God in the least herb of the field; man was made so to represent God in his moral perfections as to imitate his virtues. Two things are here to be considered,

I. God's making man male and female.

II. His making man after his image.

I. Let us consider God's making man, male and female; that is, man and woman.

First, Adam was the male, and Eve the female. These were the common parents of all mankind, and there was no man in the world, before Adam. He is expressly called 'the first man,' 1 Cor. xv. 5. and Eve 'the mother of all living,' Gen. iii. 20. And hence it is said 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men,' Acts xvii. 26.

Secondly, Man consists of a soul and body, which being united constitute man; that is, man or woman. Here I shall consider, 1. The body; and, 2. The soul.

1. The body of the man. Man's body is a piece of most rare and curious workmanship, plainly indicating its divine Maker. In it there is a variety of members, none of them superfluous, but all adapted to the use assigned them by the wise Creator. The man's body, as Moses tells us, was formed of the dust of the ground, Gen. ii. 7. Hence he was called *Adam*, which signifies *red earth;* of which sort of virgin-earth man's body seems to have been made. The word rendered *dust*, signifies not dust simply, (says Zanchius), but clay, which is earth and water. This may teach us humility, and repress our pride, and particularly glorying in beauty or any external advantages of person, seeing we are sprung of no higher original than the earth upon which we tread; especially seeing, as we derived our first being from it, we must return to it again, there to abide till the resurrection-day.

2. The woman's body was formed of the man's, Gen. ii. 21, 22. of a rib of the man's side, but not a bare rib, but flesh on it, ver. 23. which was taken out of his side while he was in a deep sleep, into which God cast him; so that he felt no pain. And it is not improbable, that in that deep sleep God revealed to him what he himself afterwards declares concerning Eve, and marriage in general, ver. 23, 24. Whether Adam had more ribs than other men, is not determined. If he had, it was not superfluous to him as the origin of mankind, though it might be as a private person; and therefore Eve being made of it, there was no more use for it. If he had not more ribs than other men, yet he sustained no loss thereby, which was otherwise made up, ver. 21. either by a new rib, or hardening

the flesh to the use of a rib. In this the wisdom of God doth illustriously appear.

(1.) The woman's body was made of nobler matter than the man's, to be some ballast to the man's excellency in respect of his sex, that he might not despise but honour her. The word rendered *made*, Gen. ii. 22. is in the Hebrew *built*. He made the man, but he built the woman, as a stately palace, or house, where all mankind draw their first breath.

(2.) It was made of the man's body, to teach men to love their wives as their own flesh.

(3.) It was not made out of man's head, to shew her that she is not to be her husband's mistress, nor usurp authority over him, 1 Tim. ii. 12.; nor out of his feet, to shew him that she is not to be his slave, to be trampled on by him; but out of his side, near his heart, to shew him that she must be treated as his companion, loved, nourished, and cherished by him.

(4.) *Lastly*, The mystery of the church drawing her life out of Christ's sleeping the sleep of death on the cross, Eph. v. seems to have been here intended and shadowed forth.

The bodies of both our first parents were far more beautiful, handsome, and graceful than our bodies are now. We are begot of men, but they were the immediate workmanship of God. The author being more excellent, the workmanship must be so too. And so Adam signifies to be ruddy, and to shine, Lam. iv. 7. So that to Eve in particular may justly be applied the following lines of a celebrated poet:

> A woman loveliest of the lovely kind,
> In body perfect, and complete in mind.

Secondly, The soul of man was of an original far different from that of his body. Moses gives us this account of it, Gen. ii. 7. 'The Lord God—breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.' The Lord inspired him with a living reasonable soul, which presently appeared by his breathing at his nostrils; whereas before he was only a fair lifeless body. And this different account of man's soul and body clearly holds forth, that it was not fetched out of any power in the matter of his body, but was created of nothing. For this inspiration plainly implies that something was infused into it, which was not in it before, and did not originally inhere in it. Thus was the soul both of the man and the woman created; for that both were created with rational souls, is taught in our text, where they are said to be made after God's image; and Moses leaves us to gather the manner of the creation of the woman's

soul from that of Adam's. Concerning the soul of man, three things are specially to be known.

1. That it is an incorporeal or spiritual substance, different from the body. It is called a *spirit*, Zech. xii. 1. And Stephen prays, Acts vii. 59. 'Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit. Compare Luke xxiv. 39. where our Lord says concerning his body after his resurrection from the dead, 'Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.'

2. As the souls of Adam and Eve were immediately created of God, so the souls of all their posterity are immediately formed by God, and proceed not from their parents by generation or any other way: but God infuseth the soul created by him of nothing, into the body formed in the womb when it is fitly organised to receive it. And yet a man may properly be said to beget a man, though he only begets the body, as well as to kill a man, though he can only kill the body. This is plain from that express scripture-testimony, Zech. xii. 1.—'that formeth the spirit of man within him.' So, Heb. xii. 9. God is held forth as 'The Father of spirits,' in opposition to men as 'the fathers of our flesh;' which must needs be by immediate creation: for otherwise he is the Father of our flesh too, Eccl. xii. 7. 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.' He gave the body too, but the soul in such a manner as he gave not the body.

3. Hence the soul is immortal, being a spirit, and dies not with the body, Eccl. xii. 7. just cited. Being immaterial, not consisting of parts, it cannot be dissolved. Men can kill the body, but not the soul; and therefore it doth not die with the body, being invulnerable, and unsusceptive of external injuries, Matth. x. 28. and xxii. 32. Neither does it sleep till the resurrection, as some have foolishly supposed. Our Lord told the thief on the cross, that that very day he (that is, his soul) should be with him in paradise, not to sleep, but to be actively employed in exercises peculiar to the heavenly state. And certain it is that the apostle Paul had no such thought, when he said, Phil. i. 23. 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.' If his soul was to sleep and doze in indolence and inactivity after his death, he had never preferred the dissolution of his body, and the advantage of being with Christ, to his continuing in his mortal state, in which he was most usefully employed.

Thirdly, Why did God make man male and female?

1. That man might have a meet help, Gen. ii. 18.; and this was the meetest help for the comfort of life, (however uncomfortable sin has now made it); otherwise God had given Adam a friend and not

a wife. Hence the endearments of conjugal society, when discreetly and properly entered into and cultivated, are found, even in our present imperfect state, far preferable to those arising from the strictest and closest friendships among men.

2. For the lawful propagation of mankind, Gen. i. 27, 28. that there might be a godly seed, Mal. ii. 15. and for a remedy against all inordinate lusts and libidinous desires.

II. Let us now consider God's making man after his own image.

Here I shall shew, 1. Who was created after God's image; and 2. Wherein this image consisted.

First, I am to shew who was created after the image of God. It was both the man and the woman, as is clear from the text. In this respect, indeed, there was one thing wherein the man excelled the woman, which is taken notice of by the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 7. 'He is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man.' Not but that the woman is the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, as well as the man: but the man is the image of God in respect of that authority which he has over his wife, who is the glory of man in respect of her subjection to him. So that what we say of the man as to his being created after the divine image, must be understood of the woman too.

Secondly, I will shew wherein the image of God, in which our first parents were made, consisted. Abstracting from the spirituality of their souls, and the erect and graceful posture of their bodies, peculiar to rational animals alone, which are but a faint shadow of the image of God, (if they can with any propriety be called a shadow of it at all), this image doth principally at least shine in the soul, and those glorious qualities wherewith man was endued, that is, both the man and the woman.

1. The image of God, after which man was created, consisted in knowledge, Col. i. 10. He was created wise: Not that he knew all things, for that is proper to the omniscient Being alone; but he was ignorant of nothing that he was obliged to know; he had all the knowledge that was necessary for life and godliness. He had clear and distinct apprehensions of God, his nature and perfections, far superior to any knowledge of that kind that can now be acquired by the most diligent and the most laboured researches of human industry. And we can hardly suppose that he was ignorant of the great mystery of the Trinity, considered abstractly; as it was most certainly the second person who appeared to and conversed with him. This knowledge or wisdom of man appeared in his knowledge of the miraculous formation of Eve, whose nature and duty, as well as his own towards her, he declares; which he could not

know but by a prophetical spirit. The primitive pair had God's law written on their hearts, Rom. ii. 15. even that same law which was afterwards written on tables of stone, and promulgated from mount Sinai. It was concreated with them; so that no sooner were they man and woman, than they were knowing and intelligent creatures, endued with all the knowledge necessary for their upright state. Adam's giving names to the beasts, and those such as were expressive of their natures, Gen. ii. 19. was a great evidence of his knowledge of nature. Thus his knowledge reached from the sun, that glorious fountain of light, to the meanest glow-worm that shines in the hedge. And that God gave them dominion over the earth and all the inferior creatures, is an evidence that they were endued with the knowledge of managing civil affairs, which a wise man will manage with discretion.

2. The image of God consisted in righteousness, Eph. iv. 24. There was a perfect conformity in his will to the will of God. He was endued with a disposition to every good thing, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God made man upright.' His will was straight with God's will, not bending to the right or left hand, without any irregular bias or inclination. And he had full power and ability to fulfil the whole law of God. As, in respect of knowledge, he perfectly knew the whole extent of his duty, so he was created with sufficient powers for the due performance thereof.

3. It consisted in holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Man's affections were pure and holy, without being tinctured with any vitious appetite. They were regular and orderly, free from all disorder and distemper. They were set on lawful objects, and that in a right manner, loving what God loved, and hating what he hated; loving and delighting in God with all his heart, strength, soul, and mind. Yet all this happy disposition was mutable, he was not confirmed therein, nor set beyond the reach of falling therefrom, as the event has mournfully shewed.

This is that image of God wherein man was created, consisting in original righteousness, where his reason was naturally subject to God, his will to his reason, and his affections to his will, and consequently all duly subordinated to God, and directed to him, without any propensity or inclination to evil. A signal of this was, that both our first parents were naked, and yet were not ashamed, nor susceptive of shame.

That man was created in this condition, wise, altogether righteous, and holy, is not only clear from the above-cited scriptures, but is also agreeable to reason; which suggests, that nothing impure or imperfect, nothing having any vitious tendency or inclination, could

proceed out of the hands of an holy God, who cannot be the author of evil. Man was created after the image of God; and in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, the scripture shews us, the image of God consists. Moreover, God made all very good, Gen. i. 31. Man's goodness consists in these excellent qualities; and without these he would not have been fit for the end of his creation. How was it possible for him to have exercised the dominion he was invested with over the creatures, or served his Creator in the manner that became him without such endowments? Hence I infer,

(1.) That man was not created in pure naturals, that is, with bare faculties, neither good nor evil. For 'God made man upright,' Eccl. vii. 29.

(2.) That there was not naturally in man a combat betwixt the flesh and the spirit, betwixt reason and appetite; no inclination to sin, no lustings of the flesh, or the inferior faculties of the soul. For this corrupt will or inclination is sin properly and truly, as the apostle shews, Rom. vii. 7. and the fountain of all sin. And to say, that these dispositions were in man at his original formation, makes God indeed the author of sin; seeing he made (as they falsely pretend) man of such matter as is necessarily accompanied with this corrupt will and depraved inclination. For says the apostle, 'All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world,' 1 John ii. 16.

(3.) That original righteousness was natural to man, and not supernatural in the primitive state. Natural it was, in so far as it was concreated with him, and was necessary to the perfection of man as he came out of the creating hands of God; and was not added to be as a bridle to his natural inclinations to evil, whereof he had none.

(4.) That Adam had the same spiritual strength in innocency wherewith now the regenerate do believe in Christ; having a power to do whatsoever God should command, and to believe whatever he should reveal.

4. The image of God consisted consequently at least in dominion over the inferior creatures, whereby he had a right to dispose of them according to his pleasure, Gen. i. 26, 27.; which was a resemblance of the supreme dominion of God over the creatures, though not absolute and unlimited, but dependent on God. This was evidenced by the beasts being brought to Adam, in token of their subjection to him, and his imposing names on them expressive of their natures and properties.

The image of God seated in man's spiritual and immortal soul,

endued with understanding, will, and affections, shone forth also in his body, which had a wonderful beauty in it, and such an admirable contexture of parts, adapted to their several uses and ends, as shewed it was intended for an immortal duration. There was no blemish, defect, nor disease, to be found in him. He was not liable to any attack by gout or gravel, or any tormenting pain. All the humours of his body were in a just temperament and disposition, calculated to prevent any distemper which might tend to the dissolution of that excellent constitution. His senses were all quick and lively, able to perform with vigour and delight their several operations. He was immortal in this state; and not subject to the attacks of death. Though his body was composed of jarring elements, which had a natural tendency to dissolution, yet the soul was endued with such virtue as to embalm the body, and preserve it from the least degree of corruption. The tree of life was the sacramental pledge of man's immortality. The erect figure of his body looking towards heaven, and the majesty that is in his countenance, shewed man to be the chief of the works of God in this lower world.

I shall shut up all with a few inferences.

1. Ah! how are we fallen from heaven! What a lamentable change has sin brought on man! It has defaced the moral image of God, with which man's soul was beautifully decorated in his primitive state, and rent in pieces that pleasant picture of himself which God set up in this lower world. This stately fabric lies now in ruins, and calls us to lament over its ruins with weeping eyes and grieved hearts. Now there is ignorance in the mind, instead of that knowledge of God and divine things, with which it was richly furnished in its primitive state. The understanding, that as a lamp or candle shone brightly, is now enveloped with darkness. The will, that was exactly conformable to the will of God, and naturally disposed to comply with every intimation thereof, is now filled with irregularity, enmity, and rebellion against God and his law. The affections that were all regular, holy, and pure, are now disordered and distempered, placed upon and eagerly bent towards improper and sinful objects, loving and doating upon what men should hate, hating what they should love, joying in what they ought to mourn for, glorying in what is shameful, abhorring the chief good, and desiring what is ruinous to them. All the members of the body that were subordinated to the upright mind, and entirely at its command, are now in rebellion, and mislead and enslave the mind and superior faculties. And the creatures that were man's humble servants, ready to execute his commands, are now risen up against him, and the least of them having

a commission, would prove more than a match for him. Nay, it is with difficulty and much pains that any of them are brought to engage in his service. Ah! how dismal is man's case! The crown is fallen from our head: wo unto us that we have sinned. Let us weep and mourn over our ruined state, and never rest till we get it repaired by faith in the Lord Jesus, the great Repairer of this spiritual breach.

2. How lovely are knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, wherein the image of God consists! They shine with a dazzling brightness, and should charm and captivate our minds. But, alas! by nature we are blind, and see not their beauty and excellency. O! let us endeavour, through grace, to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Try if this blessed change has passed upon you, if ye be now light in the Lord, be disposed to do his will, and are holy in heart and life. Study righteousness and holiness if ye would be like God. And beware of ignorance, unrighteousness, and impurity, which proceed from Satan, and make you so unlike a righteous and holy God.

3. Come to the Lord Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and the beginning of the creation of God, who at first made man after the divine image, and can make him so over again, and will do so to those that come to him by faith, with this addition, that the image of God which he will impress on the soul anew, shall never be lost any more. O come to him now, that ye may become God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

MATTH. x. 29.—*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*

OUR Lord is here encouraging his disciples against all the troubles and distresses they might meet with in their way, and particularly against the fear of men, by the consideration of the providence of God, which reaches unto the meanest of things, sparrows and the hairs of our head. Sparrows are of a mean price and small value; and yet, for as mean as they are, God preserves them, guides and disposes of all things concerning them, so that one of them cannot fall to the ground by shot or any other way, without his sovereign ordering and disposal.

The instruction deducible from the text is,

DOCT. 'There is a providence that extends itself to the least of things.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew that there is a providence.

II. Consider its object.

III. Explain the acts thereof.

IV. Consider its properties.

V. Lastly, make improvement.

I. I am to shew that there is a providence. This appears,

1. From plain scripture-testimonies; as Psal. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all.' Acts xvii. 28. 'In him we live, and move, and have our being,' Eph. i. 11.—'Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' Providence is also held forth by a threefold scripture-emblem. Chiefly, (1.) Mount Moriah, which upon occasion of the miraculous preservation of Isaac, and a ram to be put in his room in order to be sacrificed, was called JEHOVAH JIREH, i. e. *The Lord will provide*, Gen. xxii. 14. (2.) Jacob's ladder, on which God appears managing all things, Gen. xxviii. (3.) Ezekiel's wheels, where there was a wheel in the middle of a wheel, denoting the agency of the first cause, and the superintending and directing providence of God, Ezek. i.

2. From the nature of God, who being independent, and the first cause of all things, the creatures must needs depend upon him in their being and working. He is the end of all things, wise, knowing how to manage all for the best; powerful to effectuate whatever he has purposed; and faithful to accomplish all he has decreed, promised, or threatened.

3. From the harmony and order of the most confused things in the world. Every thing appears to a discerning eye to be wisely ordered, notwithstanding the confusions that seem to take place. What would become of the world, if there were not a providence seeing men that despise all order, and would fain give loose reins to their lusts and unbridled inclinations, are always the greatest party, and would overpower and destroy the smaller and most virtuous party? Herein the truth of providence clearly appears. The extraordinary judgments that have pursued and been inflicted upon wicked men, and the remarkable deliverances that have been granted to the church and people of God in all ages, do loudly proclaim a providence.

4. From the fulfilment of prophecies, which could not possibly be without a providence to bring them to pass.

II. Let us, in the next place, consider the object of providence, or that which it reacheth and extendeth to. And this is all the creatures, and all their actions, Heb. i. 3.—'Upholding all things by the word of his power,' Psal. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all.' The angels are subject to this providence, Neh. ix. 6. 'Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.' So are also the devils, these infernal spirits, Matth. viii. 31, 'If thou cast us out (said they to Jesus), suffer us to go away unto the herd of swine.' It reacheth natural things, as clouds, snow, winds, &c. as appears from Psal. civ. cxlvii. and from daily observation. Casual things are ordered by providence, as lots, Prov. xvi. 33. 'The lot is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.' So in the case of accidental manslaughter, Exod. xxi. 13. 'If a man lie not in wait, and God deliver him into his hand.' There is nothing so mean but providence extends to it, such as the falling of a sparrow, and the numbering of the hairs of our head. It is God that feeds the fowls and the young ravens that cry. He clothes the lilies and grass of the field, that have no hand of man about them. He made lice, frogs, &c. a plague to scourge Pharaoh and his people, worms to eat up Herod, &c. In a special manner providence is conversant about man, forming him in the womb, 'Hast thou not poured me out as milk (says Job), and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with flesh and hast fenced me with bones and sinews,' Job x. 10, 11.—bringing him forth out of his mother's bowels, and holding him up thereafter, Psal. lxxi. 6. His heart is in the Lord's hand, and all his thoughts and inclinations are under his controul, Prov. xxi. 1.

He directs and orders all his steps. The most free acts of the creature's will are governed by superintending providence. All their good actions, John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' So also their evil actions, Acts iv. 27, 28. 'For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done,' Gen. xlv. 7. 'God sent me before you,' says Joseph to his brethren, though they had wickedly sold him into Egypt.

III. I proceed to consider the acts of providence. They are two, preserving and governing the creatures and their actions.

1. God by his providence preserves all the creatures. This preservation of the creatures is an act of providence, whereby they are preserved in their being and power of acting, Heb. i. 3. 'Upholding all things by the word of his power.' In this God sometimes makes use of means, and sometimes acts without means. We have both described, Hos. ii. 21, 22. 'I will hear saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.' He preserves the heavens immediately, the earth, the corn, the wine, and the oil, &c. mediately. And thus by his providence he provides all things necessary for the preservation of all things; Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. 'The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.' This act of providence is so necessary, that nothing could subsist one moment without it. For there is no necessary connexion betwixt the being of the creatures this moment and their being the next; and as they could not give themselves a being, so they cannot continue it, but must be upheld by God as a ball in the air, Heb. i. 3. There is a continual efflux of providence necessary for preserving and upholding the creatures in their being, otherwise they would be independent, and could preserve themselves, which is grossly absurd.

2. God does not only preserve the creatures, but governs and manages them, which is the second act of providence; whereby he disposes of all things, persons, and actions, according to his will, Prov. xxi. 1. 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will, Prov. xvi. 33. 'The lot is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.' Chap. xvi. 9. 'A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.' And this act of providence is also necessary: for as the creature cannot be or exist without God, so neither can it act without him, Acts xvii. 21. 'For in him we live, and

move, and have our being.' God does not make man as the carpenter doth the ship, which afterwards sails without him; but he rules and guides him, sitting at the helm, to direct and order all his motions: so that whatever men do, they do nothing without him: not only in their good actions, where he gives grace, and excites it, working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure: but also in their evil actions, wherein they are under the hand of Providence, but in a very different manner.

For understanding this point, how the providence of God reacheth to and is concerned in sinful actions, we are to consider, that God neither puts evil into the hearts of men, nor stirs them up to it: for, says the apostle, Jam. i. 13. 'God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth he any man.' And therefore he is not the author of sin. But,

1. God permits sin, when he does not hinder it, which he is not obliged to do. Not that it falls out so as he cannot hinder it, for he is omnipotent, and can do all things; nor yet as if he cared not what fell out in the world; but he does wisely, for his holy ends, efficaciously will not to hinder it: Hence we read, Acts xiv. 16. that 'God in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.' He does not permit sin, for that he will not violate or force the creature's free will; for God's providence offers no violence to the will of the creature; and if so, he should never hinder sin at all, for the same reason. But certainly he has holy ends in the permission of sin: for thereby his justice, mercy, wisdom, and love, in sending his Son to save sinners, do conspicuously appear, which otherwise would have been under an eternal cloud, hid from the view of men and angels.

For the further illustration of this doctrine relating to the concern of providence in sinful actions, we are to consider them in a twofold respect, as simple actions, or natural actions of the creature, abstract from any obliquity or deformity cleaving to them; and as actions having irregularity and pravity in them. Considered as natural actions of the creature, they are all effected by the providence of God, which co-operates with, and enables the creature to produce them, in such a manner that without the efflux of providence the creature could not move a hand or foot, or perform any action whatever; 'for in him we move:' and no action of the creature simply considered, or as a natural action, can be sinful, but has a goodness of being in it, and is effected by the influence of providence. As to the pravity or sin that is in actions, as God decreed the futurition of sin, or permitted it to take place, and did not hinder it; so all the sin or vitiosity that is in actions proceeds entirely from

the creature, and the evil lusts and passions that are in his heart.

Thus a man's taking up a stone, and throwing it, is a natural action, which the providence of God enables him to perform; but his throwing it at another man with an intention to kill him, is permitted by God, otherwise it could not take place; for if a hair cannot fall from our head without the providence of God, much less can a man be murdered without it: and the killing of the man by the throwing of the stone, proceeds entirely from the malice and wickedness that was in the heart of the murderer, the operation of which God did not hinder, which he is nowise obliged to do.

2. God leaves the sinner so far as he sees meet to the swing of his own lusts, and denies him restaining grace. Thus it is said of Hezekiah, a godly king, that, "in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. And when the restraint is taken off the sinner, he runs furiously, to evil.

3. God bounds sin, and restrains men in their sins, as he does the raging sea, allowing it to go so far, but no further. He has such a power and command over wicked men, that they are not masters of their own affections and dispositions, but many times act quite contrary to what they had firmly resolved and proposed: as in the case of Laban. He pursued Jacob, when he left Padan-aram, in order to return into his own country, with a wicked intention to do him hurt, by robbing him of his wives, children, and cattle; but the Lord restrained him, and influenced him to enter into a covenant of friendship with the good patriarch, Gen. xxxii. Thus Esau had resolved on Jacob's death, and went out to meet him with a purpose to destroy him; but when providence brought them together, it is said, "Esau embraced Jacob, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Thus Balaam came with an express intention to curse Israel, and yet he fell a blessing them. Thus he bent the hearts of the Egyptians to favour the Israelites, so that they sent them away with great riches, by lending them jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and costly garments. Thus, by a secret instinct, he turned Jehoshaphat's enemies away from him, when they came with a purpose to destroy him, 2 Chron. xviii. 31.; and at another time he turned his enemies against themselves, so that they sheathed their swords in one another's bowels, 2 Chron. xx. Thus also he restrained the soldiers that broke the legs of the two thieves that were crucified with Christ, from touching his, in order to accomplish his word, that a bone of the paschal lamb, which was a type of Christ, the Lamb of God, should not be broken. So true is that saying of the Psalmist,

Psal. lxxvi. 10. 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.' God has a bridle in the mouths of wicked men, when they are under the most impetuous fury of their lusts, to turn them as he will, restraining and curbing in respect of some, and giving swing to others.

4. *Lastly*, God over-rules all to a good end. God has one end in wicked actions, and the sinner another. The sinner minds and intends evil, but God means and designs good by them all. So Joseph's brethren, in their cruelly selling him for a slave, meant evil to the poor youth; but God, in that dispensation meant it for good, and brought much good out of it to Joseph, and his father and brethren. Thus the Jews crucified Christ out of malice against him; but God by that crucifixion intended satisfaction to his justice for the sins of men, and the redemption and salvation of an elect world. Thus God brings good, the greatest good out of the worst of evils. What greater evil or more atrocious wickedness can be imagined, than the violent death of the innocent Son of God, who went about doing good, and was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners? and yet what a rich and astonishing good resulted therefrom, even glory to God, and peace and good-will towards men!

IV. Our next business is to consider the properties of divine providence.

1. God's providence is most holy, Psal. cxlv. 17. 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' Even though providence reach to and be conversant in sinful actions, yet it is pure; as the sun contracts no defilement, though it shine on a dunghill. For God is neither the physical nor moral cause of the evil of any action, more than he who rides on a lame horse is the cause of his halting. All the evil that is in sinful actions proceeds and flows from the wicked agent, as the stench of the dunghill does not proceed from the heat of the sun, but from the corrupt matter contained in the dunghill.

2. It is most wise, Isa. xxviii. 29. 'This cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.' Infinite wisdom always proposes the most excellent ends in all its operations, and uses the best methods for accomplishing its ends. However perplexed confused, and void of wisdom providential administrations may appear to us poor mortals of narrow, shallow capacities, yet they are the result of the highest wisdom and the deepest counsel, as proceeding from and directed by him whose name is *the only wise God*, and cannot but manage all things with the greatest understanding. And the day will at last come when it

shall be said by the united voice of the whole assembly and church of the first-born, that God hath done all things well: and then the plan of providence will appear in every respect to have been most wise, harmonious and consistent.

3. Providence is most powerful. Hence the Lord says to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria 'I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest,' 2 Kings xix. 28. 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.' Who can resist his will which is almighty? He can never fail of his end, but all things fall out according to his decree, which is efficacious and irresistible.

I shall conclude with an use of exhortation.

1. Beware of drawing an excuse for your sin from the providence of God; for it is most holy, and has not the least efficiency in any sin you commit. Every sin is an act of rebellion against God; a breach of his holy law, and deserves his wrath and curse; and therefore cannot be authorised by an infinitely-holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity without detestation and abhorrence. Though he has by a permissive decree allowed moral evil to be in the world, yet that has no influence on the sinner to commit it. For it is not the fulfilling of God's decree, which is an absolute secret to every mortal, but the gratification of their own lusts and perverse inclinations, that men intend and mind in the commission of sin.

2. Beware of murmuring and fretting under any dispensations of providence that ye meet with; remembering that nothing falls out without a wise and holy providence, which knows best what is fit and proper for you. And in all cases, even amidst the most afflicting incidents that befal you, learn submission to the will of God; as Job did, when he said, in consequence of a train of the heaviest calamities that happened to him, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job i. 21. In the most distressing case say with the disciples, 'The will of the Lord be done,' Acts xxi. 14.

3. Beware of anxious cares and diffidence about your throughbearing in the world. This our Lord has cautioned his followers against, Matth. vi. 31. 'Take no thought (that is, anxious and perplexing thought), saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?' Never let the fear of man stop you from duty, Matth. x. 28, 29.; but let your souls learn to trust in God, who guides and superintends all the events and administrations of providence, by whatever hands they are performed.

4. Do not slight means, seeing God worketh by them; and he that hath appointed the end orders the means necessary for gaining the end. Do not rely upon means, for they can do nothing without God, Matth. iv. 4. Do not despond if there be no means, for God can work without them, as well as with them; Hos. i. 7. 'I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.' If the means be unlikely, he can work above them, Rom. iv. 19. 'He considered not his own body now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.' If the means be contrary, he can work by contrary means, as he saved Jonah by the whale that devoured him. That fish swallowed up the prophet, but by the direction of providence, it vomited him out upon dry land.

5. *Lastly*, Happy is the people whose God the Lord is: for all things shall work together for their good. They may sit secure in exercising faith upon God, come what will. They have ground for prayer; for God is a prayer-hearing God, and will be inquired of by his people as to all their concerns in the world. And they have ground for the greatest encouragement and comfort amidst all the events of providence, seeing they are managed by their covenant God and gracious friend, who will never neglect or overlook his dear people, and whatever concerns them. For he hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5.

THE WISE OBSERVATION OF PROVIDENCES ILLUSTRATED AND ENFORCED.

PSAL. CVII. 43.—*Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.*

WHOSOEVER would walk with God, must be due observers of the word and providence of God, for by these in a special manner he manifests himself to his people. In the one we see what he says; in the other what he does. These are the two books that every student of holiness ought to be much conversant in. They are both written with one hand, and they should both be carefully read, by those that would have not only the name of religion, but the thing. They should be studied together, if we would profit by either; for being taken together, they give light the one to the other; and as it is our duty to read the word, so it is also our duty to observe the work of God, Psal. xxviii. 5. The one I formerly recommended; and I am now to press the other, as a proper addition to our late

discourse on the providence of God, from the text now read. Wherein we have two things.

1. The observing of providences recommended, *Whoso is wise, &c.* In the Hebrew it runs, *Who is wise, and will observe these things.* Wherein we may observe,

1*st*, The duty itself recommended, *observing these things.* Where we are to consider the act and the object.

(1.) The object *these things;* that is, the dispensations of providence. These are the things the Psalmist would have men to observe. For the design of this psalm is to praise God for his wonderful works of providence in the world, especially in the church. For this cause he sets before us, (1.) Wonderful deliverances wrought by providence, instanced in the seasonable relief given to, (1.) Needy and bewildered strangers, far from their own, ver. 3.—9. (2.) Captives and prisoners, ver. 10.—16. (3.) Sick people at the gates of death, ver. 17.—22. (4.) To seafaring men in a storm, ver. 23.—32. (2.) Strange and surprising changes in human affairs. (1.) Fruitful places made barren, and barren places fruitful. ver. 33.—35. For an instance of which we need but consider this our own country, sometime a forest, for little use but to be a hunting-field, now comfortably maintaining many families, and useful to the nation by its great store. (2.) Mean families raised by a blessing on their husbandry and store, and cast down again from their prosperity by cross providences, ver. 36.—39. (3.) Those that were high in the world abased, and those that were mean and despicable raised to honour, ver. 40, 41. These turns of providence are of use to solace saints, and silence sinners, ver. 42. Now, here is a field opened for serious observation. These and such like things we are called to notice.

(2.) The act, *observation.* We must not let providences pass without remark, but observe them carefully, as men that are neither fools nor atheists, but have eyes in their heads, and do not think the world is guided by blind chance, but by an infinitely wise God. The word signifies to take heed, and retain, as a watchman in a city does. We must take heed to them as they fall out, and carefully keep them in mind, that they be not forgot, or slip out of our minds.

2*dly*, The qualification necessary to fit a man for this duty, *wisdom.* This is true spiritual wisdom; for in scripture language all strangers to serious godliness are accounted fools, however sharp-sighted otherwise they be. As for others, they neither will nor can rightly observe these things.

3*dly*, The manner of the expression. It intimates, (1.) That

there are few so wise as to observe providences. Most part of the world are stupid on that point; they let them go and come without notice, Jer. ix. 12. (2.) That those who are truly wise will do it, Hos. xiv. ult.

2. The advantage accruing from a wise observation of providences. They shall understand thereby the loving-kindness, goodness, and mercy of God, written out in his dispensations towards themselves and others; as we know how one stands affected to us by his behaviour towards us. His works will give us a clearer discovery of his glorious perfections; and these observations will enrich us with experiences. It is remarkable that some of these things are cross providences; yet a right observation of them will shew us God's kindness; for the divine goodness may be seen in cross providences as well as in favourable ones.

From the text I shall only observe one doctrine at present.

Doct. "It is the duty of Christians wisely to observe providences."

This is a weighty point in practical religion, that requires observation in speaking to it, and practising it.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What it is to observe providences wisely.

II. What are the objects about which we are to make our observations.

III. What we are to observe in them.

IV. The reasons why Christians should wisely observe providences.

V. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew what it is to observe providences wisely. It presupposes some things, and imports some things.

First, It presupposes these four things.

1. That there is a providence. The world is not managed by fortune, nor do things fall out by blind chance. That there is a God, and that there is a providence, have been always looked on by men of sound judgment as certain maxims, establishing one another. And indeed to set up the creatures to act otherwise than under the providence of God, is to set them up for independent beings, that is, for gods. The scripture is plain that it reacheth all things, Rom. xi. 36. 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things;' even from the greatest to the least, as ye will see from Mat. x. 29. 30, 31. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing; and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.' And unless it were so, how could he foresee and foretel things, Isa. xlvi. 10.

Some think this would disturb his repose, and is unworthy of him,

and his purity and wisdom. But do not these atheists see the sun in the heavens undisturbed, with his (yet) universal influence, shine on the dunghill as well as the garden, without contracting any spot? And is it unworthy of God to govern what he has created? As for the wisdom in the management of the world, they are fools who judge it folly before they see the end.

2. The faith of this providence. We must believe the doctrine of providence, if we would be wise observers thereof. The faith of the saints in this point may be shaken in an hour of temptation; as was the case with Asaph, Psal. lxxiii. 13, 14, 15. 'Verily (says he) I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.' And the unbelief of others therein makes them half atheists, Mal. iii. 14, 15. 'Ye have said, it is vain to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.' And the slender belief there is of it in the world makes men overlook providence, Hab. i. 16. 'Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag: because by them their portion is fat and their meat plenteous.' Labour ye firmly to believe providence, that ye may observe it; nay, believe it, and ye will observe it.

3. Providence has a language to the children of men. It is a clear part of the name of God whereby he manifests himself to the world, and has served to convince men of his eternal power and Godhead, whom no other arguments could reach: Dan. iv. ult. 'Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.' Psal. xix. 3, 4. 'There is no speech, nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.' Rods have a language, Micah vi. 9. 'The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' And so also have mercies a language, Rom. ii. 4. 'Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.' And providences being the work of a rational agent, they must have a design.

4. A disposition to understand the language and design of providence. It is for this end they are observed wisely, Micah vi. 9. forecited. God speaks by providence, and the wise hearken by ob-

servation, that they may know what is meant by those characters, in which God writes his mind towards them. Hence the more one pursues communion with God, he will the more narrowly observe providence; and when he grows remiss and negligent as to communion with God, he lets these things easily pass. But these are the prints of the Lord's feet, which one walking with God will set himself to observe.

Secondly, To observe providences wisely, imports these five things.

1. A watching for them till they come. Hence says the prophet, Hab. ii. 1. 'I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.' This is to wait on the Lord in the way of his judgments, Isa. xxvi. 8. A practice necessarily following on the serious practice of godliness, in laying matters before the Lord by prayer, and depending on him according to his word, Psal. cxxx. 1. 5, 6. 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. I wait for the Lord, and my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning: I say more, than they that watch for the morning.' Some providences have a glaring light with them, that cannot but strike the eye of the beholder; but others not being so may pass unobserved, if people be not on their watch. Providence sometimes works long under ground, and wraps itself up in a long night of darkness; but the wise observer will wait the dawning of the day, and the setting up its head above ground, Psal. lxix. 3. 'Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God,' Lam. iii. 49, 50. 'Mine eye trickleth down and ceaseth not, without any intermission: till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.' For they that believe will not make haste.

2. A taking heed to them, and marking them when they come, Isa. xxv. 9. 'Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' Heeding them, I mean, as from the hand of the Lord; for though men heed the thing, if they do not heed the hand it comes from, they have but the carcase without the soul of providences. The threads of providence are sometimes so small and fine, and our senses so little exercised to discern, that they may come and go without our notice, Luke xix. 44. 'Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.' Therefore the eyes of the wise man are in his head, to observe what comes from heaven; looking aforehand, and in the time; for he that looks sees, Ezek. i. 15, Zech. vi. 1.

3. A serious review of them, pondering and narrowly considering

them. We should not only look to them, but into them, Psal. cxi. 2. 'The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.' And the more we see of them, the more of God we will see in them; for the further we wade in these waters, the deeper. Providence is a wheel within a wheel, a piece of the nice workmanship of heaven, which may make us cry out with wonder many a time, *O wheel!* Ezek. x. 13. The design of providence ofttimes lies hid, not to be seen at first view; but we must look again and again, and narrowly inspect it, ere we can comprehend it. It is a mystery many times, looking at which our weak eyes will begin to dazzle. And that we may unravel the clue by a sanctified judgment, Psal. lxxvii. 6. it will be needful to call in the help of prayer, with much humility, faith, and self-denial, Job x. 2. and of the scripture, Psal. lxxiii. 16.

4. Laying them up, and keeping them in record, Luke i. 66. We should keep them as one would do a treasure, for the time to come. Then are they experiences, which will be notable provision for after-times. O, if these observations were wisely made, and carefully laid up, the former part of our life might furnish noble helps for the latter part of it; and the longer we lived, the richer would we be in this spiritual treasure: even as in war one victory helps to get another. And the old disciple might have a body of practical experimental divinity in his head, drawn forth from his own observation. We find David, when young, improving providences formerly thus observed, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine;' and when old doing the same, Psal. xxxvii. 25. 'I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.'

5. *Lastly*, It is a practical observation of them. They who observe providences wisely do not observe them only to clear their judgments, and inform their understandings, as by matters of speculation; but to influence their hearts and affections in the conduct of their life, Micah vi. 9. The more that one wisely observes providence, he will be the more holy. The observing the work of providence about himself and others, will advance the work of grace in the heart, and holiness in the life, Rom. v. 4. 'Patience worketh experience; and experience hope,' Psal. lxiv. 7, 9. 'God shall shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider his doing.' It is a woful observation of providence, when it has no good effect on people to make them better.

Hence Moses says to the Israelites, Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4. 'Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.' But it is yet worse when people are made worse thereby, as in the case of him who said, 'Behold this evil is of the Lord, what! should I wait for the Lord any longer?' 2 Kings vi. 33. But it is a kindly effect of it when men accommodate their spirits to the divine dispensations they are under, according to that, Eccl. vii. 14. 'In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.'

II. I come now to speak of the objects about which we are wisely to make our observations, *these things*. This is a spacious field, as broad as the universe, or the whole creation, so far as we come to the knowledge any manner of way of the works of God. For providence reacheth to all things, and in every thing the finger of God is to be seen. None of all God's works of providence laid open to our view are excepted, nor allowed to be overlooked, Psal. xxviii. 5. And all of them may be profitably noticed. But more particularly, I shall offer you a sample of the admirable web of providence; a sample, I say, for how small a part of his ways do we know? The dispensations of providence may be considered,

1. With respect to their objects.
2. With respect to their kinds.
3. With respect to the time of their falling out.

FIRST, Providences may be considered with respect to their objects, which are all the creatures and all their actions. And here let us,

First, Look into the invisible world, and trace providence a little there. It becomes Christians to cause their eye to follow there where God's hand is before them at work. David tells us, Psal. cxxxix. 8. 'If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.' God is there with his hand of providence, ver. 10. 'Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.' And the apostle gives the Christian that character, 2 Cor. iv. 18. that 'he looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.'

First, Look to the lower part of that world, the kingdom of darkness, and there you see devils and damned spirits of men, with the providence of God about them in an awful manner. A fearful web of providence encompasses them.

1. Concerning devils, view the awful providences they are under, and observe,

(1.) How these once glorious creatures are now irrecoverably lost, and reserved to a certain and dreadful judgment, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6. Behold and learn the severity of God's justice from this his work; how no natural excellency will preserve the creature from wrath when once defiled with sin. They were the first that ventured to break over the hedge of the holy law, and God set them up for dreadful examples to the whole creation. Behold the power of God, whose hands devils themselves cannot rid themselves out of. And understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, in providing a Saviour for man, and not for them, Heb. ii. 16.

(2.) How, notwithstanding, these malicious creatures are not so pent up in their prison, but they are permitted to go about through the world; yet this world is generally inhabited without molestation from them. Only now and then, in some very rare cases, they are suffered to molest men, by a particular providential permission as in the case of Job, chap. ii. This general case of the world is a continued wonder of providence. How is it that ever we get any rest from them in house or field? It is not for want of will or natural power, but from the restraint of providence upon them, continued upon them, notwithstanding the world's wickedness. Observe this thankfully, and understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

2. Concerning damned spirits, who are in hell under the wrath of God, see the awful providences about them, and observe how miserable they are, Luke xvi. 23. being 'punished from the presence of the Lord,' 2 Thess. i. 9. all hopes of recovery being now lost for ever. And learn how precious time is, that what we have to do, ye may do quickly: how deceitful sin and the world are; and how severely God punishes at length, though he may long bear with sinners. And understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, that ye are yet in the land of the living, under means of grace, and hopes of glory.

Secondly, Look to the upper part of the invisible world, the regions of bliss; and there you will see angels and the spirits of just men made perfect wrapt up in a glorious web of providence, sparkling with goodness and mercy. See the Larger Catechism on Providence.

Concerning the blessed angels, observe,

1. How they are established in holiness and happiness, 1 Tim. v. 21. They were of the same changeable nature with those that fell; but God held them up, and has confirmed them, that they cannot fall now. And learn the power of sovereign grace, which can establish one tottering creature when another falls; and how happy

they are who cheerfully do the will of God, for so the angels do in heaven. Though proud shining hypocrites fall away and perish, yet trembling saints shall be made to stand.

2. How they are employed in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice, 2 Kings xix. 35. In one night the angel of the Lord smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand, Heb. i. 14. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' God sends them to take care of his children, who no doubt receive many benefits off their hands, which they are not sensible of. Understand the loving-kindness of the Lord in sending them, and their love to God and man in taking such employment. The living creatures have the wheels going by them.

Concerning the souls of the blessed, observe how blessed and happy they are in the enjoyment of God, where no clouds interpose betwixt them and the light of his countenance, Heb. xii. 23. Luke xvi. 22. And learn here what a vain thing this world is, and how we may be happy without it, yea cannot be completely happy till we be beyond it. What a rich harvest the seed of grace in the soul brings in, and how holiness leads the way to complete happiness. Wonderful is the loving-kindness of the Lord, that takes those who serve him here, to be his attendants in his palace and brings them to the full enjoyment of himself in glory.

Let this suffice for a sample of providence in the invisible world.

Secondly, Look to the visible world, and trace providence there. See how the hand of the Lord is constantly at work about these his creatures which he has made, John v. 17. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'

1. Consider the inanimate or lifeless creatures, which are the objects of providence as well as other things. They are not capable of self-governing, but he that made them guides them to their ends.

The heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars, are under the government of wise providence. They got their orders at first, Gen. i. 16. 'God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.' And they have still observed these orders since. Psal. civ. 19. 'He appointeth the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.' Sometimes indeed by a particular commission, they have altered their ordinary course as in Joshua's time, chap. x. 12, 13, when the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon; for a whole day; but they returned to their course again. The sun keeps his course allotted him by the divine decree; for should he go at random, our earth would either be burnt or quite frozen up, that

we could not live on it. O the loving-kindness of the Lord, that makes the very heavenly bodies punctually to keep pace with our necessities, and has not avenged himself on men's disorders, by suffering these to go into disorder and confusion!

The raging sea is under the management of providence. God manages it as easily as the nurse does the infant, whom she swaddles and lays in its cradle, from whence it cannot get out, while she will have it to stay there; Job xxxviii. 11. 'Hitherto shalt thou come (says Providence to this unruly element), but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.' O look to his work and learn his loving-kindness, Psal. civ. 24, 25, 26. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships; there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.' Behold his greatness, and adore him, Matth. viii. 27. 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?' Fear before such a mighty One, Isa. xxviii. 2. And let it quiet your hearts under all the tossings ye meet with in the world; for it will cost him but to say, 'Peace and be still;' Psal. xciii. 4. 'The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.'

The air and wind, which no man can lay hold of, are entirely under the conduct of Providence, John iii. 8. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth,' in respect of man; but in respect of God, where he listeth, Matth. viii. 27. forecited. What a wonder is it, (not to speak of tempests, hail, rain, snow, &c. Psal. cxlvii. 15.—18), that such a thin invisible body should bear up all the fowls of the air, the heavy clouds also, and carry them from place to place, so that we may say, as Psal. xviii. 10. 'He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind! How then can our God be at a loss for means to support us? He has filled the world with it; it is about us, in us, in our nostrils, in our bowels, nay, in every pore of our bodies; yea, without it we could not breathe, yet we see it not. Shall we then think it strange, that the God who made it is every where present? Nay, he is without and within us, though we see him not. If he mix pestilential vapours with it, we are dead men, as if poison were mixed with our drink: for at every breathing we draw it in; so entirely do we depend on the Lord. O then understand the loving-kindness of the Lord in this respect.

The earth is under the care and government of the same wise Providence. He made it, and that was a great work; he preserves it and governs it, and that is another. He supports it, Heb. i. 3.

The earth bears us, but what bears the earth? You cannot think it is infinite or boundless, and therefore it must have another side opposite to that we are on. Yes, and by the powerful providence of God it hangs like a ball in the air, Job xxvi. 7. 'He hangeth the earth upon nothing.' O then, is there any thing too hard for our God to do? He fills it with his riches, the surface of it, and the bowels of it, Psal. civ. 24. But what is most necessary for men's use is on the surface of it, easiest to be come at, Job xxviii. He feeds it, that it may feed us, Deut. xi. 11. Hos. ii. 21, 22. When the strength thereof is weakened with new influences from the heavens, he renews it, Psal. civ. 30. And since the flood, the promise then given, Gen. viii. 22. that 'while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease,' has been punctually performed. O understand the loving-kindness of the Lord in these things, what a gracious and bountiful God he is! And learn how surely all his promises to his people shall be accomplished.

2. Consider the vegetative part of the world, things that have life, but not sense, such as trees, plants, &c. how Providence cares for and manages them. Our Lord calls us to observe these things, and thereby understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, Matth. vi. 28. 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin.' Lilies of the field have not the care of man about them, as those of the garden, but Providence cares for them. This teaches us to lay by anxiety, and trust God, ver. 30. See how the earth is kindly furnished with vegetables by providence, not only for men's necessity, but their conveniency and delight, Psal. civ. 14,—17. And shall not this good God be loved and cheerfully served by us? Every pile of grass is a preacher of the loving-kindness of the Lord.

3. Consider the sensitive part of the world, such as have life and sense, but not reason; as birds, beasts, and fishes. And observe what a vast family are maintained on the Creator's cost. And though we cannot trust providence, yet what an innumerable company there is of dependents on mere providence! Psal. civ. 27. 'These all wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.' Observe this provision, and thence learn to believe even where ye cannot see, Matth. vi. 26, 'Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?' For Providence does for them that have none to do for them; Psal. cxlvii. 9. 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that cry.' Observe how providence has subjected

them to man as servants that could easily be his masters in respect of strength, as the horse, ox, &c. yet the face of man strikes a damp upon them, which is the more remarkable, that man by sin did forfeit his dominion over the creatures. But this must be resolved into the virtue of that word, executed daily by providence, Gen. ix. 2. 'The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea.' O what a power is in a word of divine appointment?

4. Consider the rational part of the world, men having life, sense, and reason. In these providence shews itself most brightly. Man is the compend of the creation, having a spirit as angels are spirits, and a body with the rest. And he is the peculiar care of Heaven. This is the main object of our observation.

1*st*, We should observe the dispensations of providence towards societies; and the nearer our relation to them be, we should observe them the more narrowly.

(1.) Towards societies of men in the world, kingdoms, churches, congregations, families, &c.

[1.] Much of the power, wisdom, goodness, justice, &c. of God, might be learned from the revolutions and changes in states and kingdoms, which should make us inquisitive for the knowledge of public affairs. And O what a glorious scene of providence has been opened of late in Britain, shining with illustrious mercy to the church and nation, in delivering us when at the brink of ruin; depth of wisdom, in baffling in a moment the cunning projects of enemies; almighty power, in so easily crushing their towering hopes; radiant justice, in making the stone tumble down on the heads of those that rolled it, and making enquiry for the blood of the saints shed many years ago.*

[2.] Providences toward the church of God are mainly to be observed, 1 Sam. iv. 13. The angels themselves notice these, to learn something from them, Eph. iii. 10. What concerns the church is the greatest work on the wheel of providence; and in most, if not all the great works of God through the world, he has in them an eye to his church. As she is for God, so other things are for her.

Particularly we should observe the way of providence towards the church of Scotland, whereof we are members; which has been as admirable a mixture of mercy and judgment, as perhaps any church since the apostles days has met with. How high has she

* This refers to the suppression of the rebellion in 1715. This part of the subject was preached in December 1716.

been raised in peace and purity, and how low laid at other times! How often has she been at the brink of ruin, and wonderfully preserved? How have her faithful friends been signally owned of God, and her enemies often borne the evident marks of God's displeasure! &c. And yet, more particularly,

We should observe the way and aspect of providence towards the congregation, how the Lord has been and is dealing with us, that we may accommodate ourselves to his dispensations, and answer the call of them.

[3.] Towards families. Sometimes the Lord causes a warm sunshine of prosperity on families, and sometimes the heavens are louring above them; they have their risings and fallings, as all other societies in this changeable world, as is beautifully described by the Psalmist, Psal. cvii. 38, 39, 41. 'He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. Again they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.' How does Job mournfully observe the way of providence with his family, chap. xxix. 2.—5. and David on his death-bed the humbling circumstances of his! 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

There are few of our families but God has of late one way or other visited them; his voice has cried to our houses, as well as to the land. It is our duty to observe the same, read the language of it, and comply with the design thereof.

2*dly* Towards particular persons; for we may learn something from God's way with every one. And,

(1.) Towards others, whether godly or wicked. This was the Psalmist's practice to have his eyes in his head, and to look about him in the world, and learn something for his own establishment, both from the harms and happiness of others, Psal. xxxvii. 35.—37. 'I have seen the wicked in great power; and spreading himself like a green bay-tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.' It is observable, that the holy scripture is not written as a system of precepts, with the reasons of them; but the body of it is a cluster of examples, wherein we may see, as in a glass, what we are to follow if we would be happy, and what we are to shun, Rom. xv. 4. 'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.' A plain evidence, that whoso would please God, must observe those things that are set before his eyes in providence.

(2.) Towards ourselves in particular. These providences come

nearest us, and therefore should be most narrowly observed. In these we are the parties to whom God directs his speech immediately; but, alas! often it is not observed, Job xxxiii. 14. 'For God speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not.' There is none of us that are not the objects of wonderful providences, but especially true Christians, who may well say, as Psal. xl. 5. 'Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.' We might each of us fill a volume with accounts of the wonderful works of God, and yet confine ourselves to what has happened to ourselves, if we had but the wisdom to observe the same. Every moment we would be a wonder to ourselves, if we could but discern the beautiful mixture of that web of providence wherein every moment we are wrapt up.

(1.) Let us observe how we are powerfully preserved by Providence, Heb. i. 3. Psal. xxxvi. 6. 'Lord, thou preservest man and beast.' When we consider how unlike our souls are to our bodies, we may more wonder at the continuance than the breach of that union. When we think how death has as many gates to come in by, as our body has pores, how the seeds of a thousand diseases are in our bodies, what a train of perishing principles they are made up of, how easily, while we walk amidst the creatures of God here, fire may be set to the train, and the house of clay quickly blown up, we may say there is something more astonishing in our life than in our death. And it must be a powerful providence that preserves this life of ours, as a spark of fire in the midst of an ocean of water, or as a bag of powder amidst sparks of fire flying on every hand.

Besides, how few of us are there, but sometimes there has been but as a hair-breadth betwixt death and us, by reason either of diseases or unforeseen accidents, which we could not therefore ward off. So that we might say of our preservation, This is the finger of God.

What remarkable deliverances has the Lord wrought for some by unordinary means, as Jonah preserved by a whale, and Elijah fed by the ravens!

(2.) How we are holily, wisely, and powerfully governed by Providence, our persons and actions disposed of according to his will, either in mercy or in wrath, Dan. iv. 35. 'All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand or say unto him, What dost thou?' Psal. cxxxv. 6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.' While we sail the sea

of this world, we may well perceive, that it is not we ourselves, but holy providence that guides the ship: Jer. x. 23. 'O Lord, (says the prophet), I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' And while men will not see this, to engage them to a life of holiness, faith, and dependance on God, they are often made to feel it, by their dashing on rocks, to the bruising, if not to the splitting of them, Isa. xxvi. 11. 'Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed.' Let me instance here but in two things, to shew that God sits King, and rules among men.

(1.) Man proposeth, but God disposeth, Lam. iii. 37. 'Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?' How often are men's towering hopes levelled with the ground in a moment? Their projects are laid with all the wit and industry they are capable of, managed with all diligence and circumspection, so that they cannot see how they can misgive, but must take effect according to their wish. But he that sits in heaven, in a moment looses a pin, and all the fabric falls to the ground, their projects are baffled, their measures disconcerted, some stroke of providence, which ungodly men call an unlucky accident, mars all. This was evident in Haman's case. Sometimes it is done by an invisible hand, whereby the wheels are taken off, that they can drive no farther, Job xx. 26. 'All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.' How often do men find their greatest cross where they looked for their greatest comfort! and things turn about quite the contrary way to what was their design.

(2.) Man's extremity is God's opportunity, Gen. xxii. 14. How often does the Lord begin his work where man ends his, and can do no more? When men know not what to do, God opens a door; and when they have no firm ground of their own left to stand upon, he sets their foot on a rock, Psal. cvii. 27, 28. 'They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.' Their hopes are disappointed, but their fears and desperate conclusions are prevented. Something threatens them a stroke, which they see not how to escape; but an invisible arm wards off the blow; and what they look for their ruin in, there they find by an over-ruling providence, healing and upmaking, Est. ix. 1. What is most unlikely is brought about, while the fairest hopes are made like the blossom that goes up as dust. Thus God baffles men's hopes on the one hand, and their fears on the other, that they may see, there is a wheel within a wheel that moves and guides all.

SECONDLY, We may consider providences with respect to their kinds, Psal. xl. 5. forecited. The wisdom of God is manifold wisdom, and produces works accordingly, Psal. civ. 24. And each of them is to be observed. I will instance in these three distinctions of providence.

First, Providences are either cross, or smiling and favourable. Both ought to be observed, and may be so profitably.

1. We should observe cross providences that we or others meet with. They come not by chance, but under the guidance of a holy sovereign God, Job v. 6. 'Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.' Amos iii. 6. 'Shall there be an evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' God makes himself known by them, his justice, truth, holiness, wisdom, and power, Psal. ix. 16. 'The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth.' And he requires us to observe them, Micah vi. 9. 'Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' And it is a horrible provocation not to observe them, Isa. xxvi. 11. forecited, and not to comply with the design of them; to murmur, but not kindly mourn under them, Job xxxv. 9, 10. and xxxvi. 13. Sometimes men meet with crosses in the way of their duty, Gal. vi. 17. and sometimes in the way of sin, as Jonah. The design of both is to purge away sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. But, without observations, the plaister is not applied to the sore.

2. Smiling and favourable providences towards ourselves or others, Psal. xl. 5. Many, in their observations of providence, are like the flies that pass over the sound places, and swarm about the sores. They are still complaining of their crosses and sorrows, and will nicely reckon them up: but as to their mercies, they will not go the length of the unjust steward, of a hundred to set down fifty, Luke xvi. 6. They have their language, but it cannot be understood without observation, Rom. ii. 4. Dependance on God, and humility of heart, would teach us carefully to observe our mercies, Lam. iii. 22. Gen. xxxii. 10. even when we are meeting with heavy crosses, Job i. 21.

Secondly, There are great lines and small lines of providence. And,

1. We should observe the great lines of providence in signal events. Some dispensations bear such a signature of a divine hand, and so flash like lightning on men's face, that one can hardly miss to observe, but must say, as Exod. viii. 19. 'This is the finger of God.' 2 Chron. xvi. 19, 20. 'Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand, to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead, before the priests in

the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests looked upon him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence, yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.' It is rare that God leaves himself without a witness, by some such signal providences; yet such is the perverseness of the heart of man, that as the blind cannot observe the flash of lightning, even these are lightly looked at, 1 Sam. vi. 9.

2. The small lines of providence. The most minute things are guided by the all-ruling hand, Matth. x. 29, 30. And if God do manage them, it becomes us to notice them. All the king's coin, from the massiest piece of gold to the smallest penny, bears the king's image and superscription, and therefore the least as well as the greatest is current in trade. So the smallest lines of providence pass current with those that keep a trade with heaven. Gideon notices his hearing a fellow tell a dream, Judges vii. 13, &c. Heman, the removing of an acquaintance, Psal. lxxxviii. 8. and Jacob, a kind word, the shew of his brother's countenance, Gen. xxxiii. 10.

Thirdly, There are common and uncommon providences.

1. We should observe common and ordinary dispensations, such as fall out every day in the common road of providence. These, because they are common, lie neglected: yet the 104th Psalm is penned on that subject. I have observed to you already, how providence appears in the constant revolutions of seasons, day and night; by the one the weary earth is refreshed, and by the other weary man, the night being fit for rest. The subjection of the beast, to man, by virtue of that divine word, Gen. ix. 2. forecited, without which man could not have his necessary designs served. I add, that wonderful diversity of faces and features, without which the man could not know his wife, nor the parents their own children, nor the judge the criminal; so that without this there could be no orderly society, no government, commerce, &c. These are a sample of common providences, which studied might be of great use.

2. Uncommon and unordinary providences, as miracles, which are beyond the power of nature; extraordinary deliverances, judgments, discoveries of secret crimes; which are bright spots here and there interspersed in the web of providence, and challenge a peculiar regard.

THIRDLY, we may consider providences with respect to the time of their falling out. The works of providence run parallel with the line of time, and the continuance of the world, John v. 17.

1. We should observe the past dispensations of providence, Psal. lxxvii. 5. 'I have considered the days of old, (says Asaph), the

years of ancient times.' An observer of providence must look off unto others, look into himself, and, with respect to himself and others, look back also.

(1.) Past providences towards others afford a large field for observation, reaching from the creation till now, Psal. cxliii. 5. 'I remember the days of old,' says David. He remembered how the Lord dealt with Nimrod, Abimelech, Pharaoh, &c. What a chain of wise providences has encompassed the world in the several generations thereof? what a beautiful mixture of providences has always appeared towards the church, while the mystery of God, not yet finished, has been a carrying on! What very remarkable things have fallen out in the life and death of particular persons! From all the particulars of these we might draw something for our spiritual advantage, as the bee from every flower extracts her honey.

(2.) Past providences towards ourselves in particular afford also a large field, reaching from our first being till now. Look back and consider that wonderful providence that framed thee in the womb, Job x. 10, 11. The Psalmist finds himself in a transport of wonder upon this reflection, Psal. cxxxix. 14, &c. Consider how the same kind providence brought thee safe out of the womb, that the womb was not made thy grave, or that thou wast not stifled in the birth, Psal. xxii. 9. How thou wast provided for and preserved from the dangers in infancy, by the same kind providence, whilst thou couldest do nothing for thyself, Psal. xxii. 9, 10. Observe the providences of God towards thee in thy childhood, youth, middle age, and forward to the present time; and thou must say as old Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 15. 'God fed me all my life long unto this day;' and with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxi. 17. 'O God thou hast taught me from my youth.' Observe how God gave thee such and such education, ordered thy lot in such and such a place in his earth, and in such sort as he has done, how he brought thee into such and such company, saved thee from such and such dangers, &c.

2. We should observe the present dispensations of providence towards ourselves and others, Zech. vi. 1, 2. It is a stream that still runs by us, like those rivers that bring down the golden ore, Psal. lxv. 11. By day nor night it ceaseth not, Psal. xix. 2. Providence with the one hand bids us stoop and take on the day's load of benefits, Psal. lxviii. 19. and with the other hand lays on the day's burden of evils, Matth. vi. ult. And therefore that is our duty, Psal. iv. 4. 'Commune with your own hearts upon your bed and be still;' that having made our observations through the day, we may cast up our accounts against night.

Thus far of the objects on which we are to make observations.

III. The next general head is, to shew what we are to observe in providences. It is not enough to observe the work itself, but we must be as particular as we can about it. This is like the bruising of the spices and the pouring out of the ointment, whereby their fragrancy is best perceived. There are these nine things I recommend to your observation.

1. The timing of providences, the great weight of a dispensation sometimes lies in this very circumstance, that then it came, and neither sooner nor later. And O the admirable wisdom that appears in thus jointing of them! Gen. xxiv. 45. Abraham's servant prays to be guided to the woman appointed to be Isaac's wife; and in the very time Rebekah comes. Gideon in the very time when he comes near the enemy's camp, hears one of them telling his dream, Judges vii. 13, &c. Uzziah is smitten in the very time when he is attempting to offer incense upon the altar of incense. And here particularly observe the timing of providences,

(1.) With respect to the frame of our spirit; for much lies in observing what frame of spirit a mercy or stroke overtakes us in. So the church observes the timing of her deliverance, that it came when they were not looking for it, Psal. cxxvi. 1. And that made it look the greater. Job observes, that his trouble came on him when he was far from security, and that made him wear it the better, Job iii. ult. Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar's trouble began when their hearts had quite forgot God, and that made the heavy hand of God the heavier. O notice carefully what frame of spirit your mercies or crosses find you in; ye will see much in that,

(2.) With respect to your circumstances. How often does kind providence catch the child at the very halting, Psal. xciv. 18. and an angry God set fire on people's nest just when they had well feathered it, and throw them down when they are just come to their height? Job xx. 23. So he did with holy Job, chap. xxix. 18. Observe it, and ye will find either a sting or a sweet ingredient in what you meet with.

There is a piece of holy foresight that an exercised Christian may have by observing the timing of a dispensation. If thou be such an one, and wouldst know whether a mercy thou hast got will last or no, how was it timed; came it to thee when thy spirit was weaned, lying at the Lord's feet? Thou hast a sure hold of it. But came it when thy spirit was upon the fret, unhumbled, unsubdued, and thou wouldest needs have it? It will stick short while in thy hand, Psal. xviii. 17, 18. Hos. xiii. 11. Fruit plucked off the tree of providence ere it be ripe, will last short while, and set their teeth on edge while they have it.

2. The beginnings and dawnings of providences, Psal. cxxx. 6. 'My soul,' says the Psalmist, 'waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning.' So did those mentioned, Luke i. 66. 'All they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be?' Sometimes a work that God has upon the wheel of providence will be but like the cloud, as big as a man's hand; but being observed, it will spread. Good Jacob observed the dawnings of providence in Joseph's case, though he little knew what a bright day it would end in, Gen. xxxvii. 11. It may be long betwixt the beginning and the end; but it is good to notice, as the holy penman does, the door of hope a little after the midnight of the captivity, Jer. lii. 31. There is a great advantage in being able to follow the thread of providence from the beginning of it.

3. The progress of providence, endeavouring always to notice the several steps of it, Luke ii. 19. and 51. and to follow the thread. For God ordinarily brings great works to pass by degrees, that so men that are weak may have the greater advantage for observation, Hos. vi. 3. Mercies and strokes may be long a-working, the decree may go long ere it bring forth: but much of the wisdom of God may be seen in the several steps it takes, and the advances it makes.

4. The turns of providence. The wheel of providence is a wheel within a wheel, and sometimes it runs upon the one side, and sometimes on the other. Observe the change of the sides. For providence to our view has many turnings and windings, and yet really it is going straight forward, Zech. xiv. 7. It runs fast to the evening with the church there; but behold the turn, 'In the evening it shall be light.' See the turn of the wheel in Joseph's case, Gen. xli. 14. in Pharaoh's taking him from prison; in the church's case, Est. vi. 3, 4. in Ahasuerus's inquiring whether any honour had been done to Mordecai for his discovering a plot formed against the king's life; and in that of Hagar and Ishmael, Gen. xxi. 17. in the angel's calling to them out of heaven, to know what ailed them. And ye may see the wheel ordinarily turns at the brow of the hill.

5. The end of providence, James v. 11. There seemed to be many dismal circumstances in Job's case, concurring to his ruin. His substance goes, his family, his health and ease; his wife bids him blaspheme and die; his friends represent his case as that of an hypocrite; many a black thread appears in the web: but O what a beautiful piece does it appear when it is wrought out! Job xlii. 10, 12.

6. The mixture of providence. The unmixed dispensation is reserved for another world; there is mercy unmixed, Rev. xxii. 1. and

judgment unmixed, chap. xiv. 10. But here all we meet with is mixed. There is never a mercy we get, but there is a cross in it; and never a cross, but there is a mercy in it. Observe the mixture of your mercies, to make you humble and heavenly; for the fairest rose that grows here has a prickle with it, and there is a tartness in our sweetest enjoyments. Observe the mixture of your crosses, to make you patient and thankful; for the bitterest pill God gives you to swallow has a vehicle of mercy, Lam. iii. 22. 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.' And wise observers will see many mercies in one cross, if they will but allow themselves to see how God could and might have made it worse.

7. The concurrence of providences. Sometimes several dispensations of providence meet together in one's case. One while there may be a meeting of several mercies together, which make a golden spot of time among them to a person. At other time several afflictions meet together, one wave comes on the back of another, till the furnace is by several coals heated seven times. Job had experience of both in his case, a train of troubles first, and a train of mercies succeeded. Jacob, when he came homeward to Canaan, had a train of troubles that waited on him. And in the case of the people of God, a very fair blink forebodes a heavy shower. The duty in that case is, 'In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider,' Eccl. vii. 14. Sometimes there is a meeting of several kinds, and one gets his bed strewed with a rose and a thorn, &c.

8. The design and language of providences, Micah vi. 9. They are the works of infinite wisdom, and therefore cannot be without a design. And seeing God speaks to us by his providences, and we ought to hear and obey when he speaks, we should be very careful to know the meaning of dispensations, that we may fall in with the call of providence. And the Lord takes it heinously ill if we do not, Jer. vii. 7. If it be dark and doubtful let us lay it before the Lord in prayer, set it in the light of the word, and meditate on it till we find it out, Psal. lxxiii. 16, 17.

9. *Lastly*, The harmony of providences. There is a fourfold harmony to be observed in providences.

1*st.*, Their harmony with the word, which they agree with as the copy with the original. The sealed book of God's decrees is opened in providences. Hence that of the opening the seals, in the Revelation. And the book of the scripture is written over again in providence, so that as in water face answereth to face, so do God's works to his word, Psal. xlviii. 8. Providence is a most regular

building, and the word is the draught of that building. Providence is a curious piece of embroidery, and the word is the pattern. So that in providence the word has been a-fulfilling ever since it was given, and still it is a-fulfilling, and the pattern will be wrought out when the mystery of God is finished, and not till then, Mat. v. 18. And thus it is a-fulfilling, not only by the extraordinary but ordinary providences. If a man quarrel any thing in a building or embroidery, there must be a comparing it with the draught or pattern of the house or embroidery, and he will be satisfied. Psal. lxxiii. 16, 17.

Ye will never observe providences aright, if ye do not observe their harmony with the word; for the word is the instituted means of the conveyance of influences, Isa. lix. ult. By neglecting of this, some dispensations prove stumbling-blocks, over which some break their necks, Mal. iii. 15. Many draw harsh and ungodly conclusions against others, whereby they only discover their own ignorance of the scriptures, and of the method of providence, Luke xiii. 1.—5. John ix. 2, 3. like Job's censorious uncharitable friends, Job v. 1.

O Sirs, learn this lesson, that all providences which you, or I, or any person or society in the world meet with, are accomplishments of the scripture. And they may be reduced to and explained by one of these five things. Either they are accomplishments of,

(1.) Scripture-doctrines, Psal. xlviii. 8. 'As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.' May not every one see, that few great men are good men? Do not stumble at it; it is but a fulfilling of the scripture, 1 Cor. i. 26. 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.' That the safest condition for the soul is the medium between great wealth and pinching poverty, according to Agur's prayer, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. 'Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.'—That Satan and the corruptions of the heart are sometimes most busy, when people are setting themselves to serve the Lord, agreeable to Paul's experience, Rom. vii. 21. 'I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.'—That the generality of the hearers of the gospel are not savingly wrought on by it, according to these scripture-passages, Isa. liii. 1. 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Matt. xxii. 14. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.' And so in other cases. Or of,

(2.) Scripture-prophecies, 1 Tim. i. 18. 'This I commit unto thee,

O Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee.' What astonishing providences were the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, the expulsion of the Canaanites, Cyrus' overturning the Babylonian empire, and loosing the captivity, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans? But all these were but a fulfilling of scripture-prophecies. What an astonishing providence was the rise, reign, and continuance of the Antichristian kingdom, and the reformation of religion in many nations, after they had lain many hundreds of years under Popish darkness; These are the fulfilling of the apocalyptic prophecies. And what an astonishing providence was the introduction of the gospel into Britain, and the preservation of it hitherto, amidst so many attempts to destroy it? It is an accomplishment of that prophecy, Isa. xlii. 4. 'The isles shall wait for his law.' Or of,

(3.) Scripture-promises, Josh. xxi. 45. 'There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel: all came to pass,' Psal. cxix. 65. 'Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word.' You see the orderly revolutions of the year, and seasons thereof; that is the fulfilling of the scripture, Gen. viii. 22.—That those who have suffered loss in the cause of Christ, have been bountifully treated with so much in hand, that they have had more content and inward satisfaction in that, than any other time of their life, is a fulfilling of scripture, Mark x. 29, 30. 'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.'—That the way of duty has been not only the most honourable but the safest way, is an accomplishment of scripture-promises, Prov. x. 9. 'He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.' Chap. xvi. 7. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.'—That communion with God is to be had in ordinances, is conformable to promise, Exod. xx. 24. 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.' Or of,

(4.) Scripture threatenings, Lev. x. 3. 'This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the congregation I will be glorified.' Hos. vii. 12. 'I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.'—You may observe how dangerous it is to meddle for the ruin of the work and people of God, from that passage, Micah iv. 11, 12. 'Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be de-

filed, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.' How their faces are covered with shame that despise the Lord, from 1 Sam. ii. 30. 'The Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed, that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'—How the faster people clave to their temporal comforts, they have the looser hold, from Ezek. xxiv. 25. 'I will take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters.'—How people may run long in an evil way, but their foot will slip at length, from Deut. xxxii. 35. 'Their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.'

(5.) *Lastly*, Or they are the parallels of scripture-examples. Psal. cxliii. 5. 'I remember the days of old.' The serious observer will find a surprising fulness here, as in the other parts of scripture. I will instance in three very astonishing pieces of providence, which often put good men to their wits end, to know how to account for them; yet being brought to the glass of scripture-examples, such a harmony appears betwixt the one and the other, as cannot but be extremely satisfying.

(1.) Sometimes we see men walking contrary to God, and yet providence smiling on them, and caressing them, as if they were the darlings of heaven. This has puzzled the best of men. It put Jeremiah sore to it, chap. xii. 1. 2, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.' It was near carrying Asaph quite off his feet, Psal. lxxiii. 13. 'Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. But, O! is there not a beautiful harmony in this with scripture-examples? How did all Israel as one man back Absalom in his rebellion? How did Haman rise till he could come no higher, unless he had got the throne? And the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar carries all before him according to his wish, &c. And scripture-doctrine unriddles the mystery, Psal. xcii. 5, 6, 7. 'O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not: neither doth a fool understand this.

When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish: it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.'

(2.) How often do astonishing strokes light on those who are dear to God, as if God selected them from among the rest of the world, to shew his hatred of them? Eccl. viii. 14, 'There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, that there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.' O Sirs, this has been very puzzling to those that have met with it. But behold the harmony with scripture-examples; as in Job's case. Eli loses his two sons at one blow, his daughter-in-law dies, and himself breaks his neck. Aaron the saint of God has two sons slain by fire from heaven. The apostles were set forth as appointed for death, &c. 1 Cor. iv. 9. Babylon is at ease when Zion lies in ruins. See Lam. ii. 20. But further,

(3.) How often has it been the lot of some of God's people to meet with heavy strokes from the hands of the Lord, when they have been going in the way which God himself bade them take? That will try people to purpose that observe these things. But blessed be God for the Bible, that lets us see this is no untrodden path. Jacob has an express command to return to Canaan, Gen. xxxi. 13. But O what a train of heavy trials attend him! Laban pursues him as a thief, Esau meets him with four hundred to slay him, the angel puts the knuckle of his thigh out of joint, his daughter is ravished by the Shechemites, his sons murder the Shechemites, Deborah dies, and his beloved wife Rachel dies, and Reuben defiles Bilhah. It was no wonder he said, 'Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.' Gen. xlvii. 9.

2dly; There is a harmony of providences among themselves. It is observed of the wheels, that the four had 'one likeness,' Ezek. i. 16. The dispensations of providence of the same kind, at the greatest distance of time from one another, have a beautiful likeness to one another. And therefore Solomon observes, Eccl. i. 10. 'Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us.' Did ever any meet with such a temptation and trial as I have met with? say some. But says the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 13. 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.' Was ever any afflicted at the rate that I am? says another. But hear what the apostle says. 1 Pet. iv. 12. 'Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.' See how Solomon accounts for this, Eccl. i. 9, 10, 11. 'The Thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that

which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall their be any remembrance of things that are to come, with those that shall come after.'

(1.) They are all wrought after the same pattern, namely, the word, in the various parts thereof. The same word which was accomplished on a nation or person thousands of years ago, is accomplished on others at this very day. The same word fulfilled in one's case some time ago, may be fulfilled over again when their case comes to be the same it was then.

(2.) They have all the same specific end, to reward or punish, check, direct, &c. And where the ends are alike, it is no wonder the measures be so too. God designed to make his enemies fall, and to deliver his church at the brink of ruin, in Esther's days; and so in ours of late. Hence the plot was suffered to succeed; and when all seemed to be done, providence struck a sudden stroke, and turned the wheel on the wicked. But is there any thing new here? was it not just so in Esther's days?

It is good to observe this harmony; for by these means one sees himself in a paved road, and so may the better know how to steer his course. When one finds himself in a road where providence has led him before, he may consult his way-marks that he set up when he was there formerly, and so may travel it the more easily. And the same may he do when he is in the road, where he observes others have been before him. He may beware of the steps where they stumbled, and keep the road by which he sees they got through.

3*dly*, There is a harmony of providences with their design and end, Deut. xxxii. 4. 'All his ways are judgment.' There is an admirable fitness in God's measures to reach his holy ends. The wheels were full of eyes as guided by infinite wisdom; and whithersoever the living creatures had a face looking, the wheels had a side to go on. Whatsoever God created was very good, Gen. i. ult. that is, very fit for the end of its creation. And so are all God's works of providence exactly answering their end. It is often observed of the wheels, *They turned not when they went*, as a chariot must needs do, when the charioteer has driven the horses the wrong way. If they were to go to another quarter, they were but to go on that side that looked that way all along. There is a twofold harmony to be observed here.

(1.) The harmony of every piece of providence with its particular end and design. Where there lie a great many pieces of wright-work framed and shapen by the tradesman, should a bungler take

them in hand, he cannot join them; he complains that one mortise is too strait, and another too wide: but the artificer can sort them, and put each in its own place, and they answer exactly. So it is with providence. Every piece answers to its end, Eccl. iii. 11. 'He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.' There is a glaring instance of this in the strokes that providence reaches sinners to punish them for particular sins, where there is such an affinity betwixt the sin and the stroke, that the sin may be read in the punishment. This is done many ways, which yet perhaps may be all reduced to one of these four. The stroke answers the sin, either,

(1.) In time, the stroke following hard at the heels of the provocation, as 1 Kings xiii. 4. When Jeroboam put forth his hand from the altar, saying, lay hold on the man of God, immediately his hand dried up. So God punished Dinah's gadding abroad unnecessarily, David's security by his adultery, and Peter's going into the high priest's hall. Or,

(2.) In kind, whereby God justly pays home a person in the same coin as he sinned. Adonibezek is a notable instance of this, Judg. i. 7. 'Threescore and ten kings (says he) having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God hath requited me.' David's injury to Uriah's bed is punished by Absalom's doing the same to his. So many disobedient to their parents are paid home by their children again. Some wrong and oppress others, and afterwards others deal just so by them. Or,

(3.) In likeness, the stroke bearing a resemblance to the sin. The Sodomites burn in lust, and they are burnt with fire from heaven. Nadab and Abihu sinned by offering strange fire, and they are consumed with fire from the Lord. Jacob beguiles his father, pretending he was Esau, and Laban beguiles him with Leah instead of Rachel. As sinners measure to God in spirituals, he measures to them in temporals, 1 Cor. xi. 30.

(4.) In flat contrariety. Adam will be as God, and he becomes like the beast that perisheth. David's pride of the numbers of his people is punished by the loss of seventy thousand of them. Rachel must have children, or she cannot live; she gets them, and dies in bringing one forth. The Jews crucify the Lord of glory, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and their nation; and that is the very thing that brings them.

(2.) The harmony of the several pieces among themselves with respect to their common end and design. And here there is often a beautiful mixture of contraries to make together one beautiful piece, Rom. viii. 28. 'All things shall work together.' Strike the

strings of a viol one by one, they make but a sorry sound; but strike them together by art, they make a pleasant harmony. The niecest piece of work lying in pieces, is but a confused heap. Joseph is sold for a slave; and he is brought into Pharaoh's presence. How contrary do these seem? but the former was as necessary as the latter to accomplish the design of providence. Haman is advanced, and the good deed done by Mordecai is forgotten, till the fittest time of remembering it. Both harmonize to Haman's ruin. Providence loses no ground in all the compasses we imagine it takes: every circumstance is necessary to the carrying on of the common end.

4thly, There is a harmony of providences with the prayers of the people of God, that have the Spirit of prayer, Gen. xxxii. compared with xxxiii. 10. Many dispensations of providence are the returns of prayer. This seems to be the ground of that conclusion, Psal. xli. 11. 'By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me;' and puts an additional sweetness in mercies. There is one general rule as to the hearing of prayer, John xvi. 23. Whatsoever prayers are believingly put up in Christ's name are heard. And so we should notice the harmony of providence with prayer. Concerning which I offer these five observations.

(1.) That where God has no mind to give such a mercy, the spirit of prayer for that mercy will be restrained, Jer. vii. 16. 'Pray not thou for this people,' &c. As, upon the other hand, when God minds his people a favour, he will open their lips to pray for it, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. 'Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' And this is no wonder, if we consider, that the Spirit of the Lord dictated the word whereof providence is the accomplishment, and the same Spirit guides the wheel of providence, Ezek. i. 20. and the same Spirit is the author of acceptable prayer, by which the sap of the word is sucked out in providence, Rom. viii. 26, 27.

(2.) God hears believing prayers, either by granting the mercy itself which is sought, as Gen. xxiv. 45. in Rebekah's appearing at the well, and drawing water as Abraham's servant had prayed for; or else the equivalent, something that is as good, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. in Paul's obtaining grace sufficient for him. Either of these ways providence brings the answer of prayer. For God's bond of promise that faith lays hold on, and pleads in prayer, may be paid either (as it were) in money or money-worth. And the harmony betwixt prayer and providence is to be acknowledged either of the ways.

(3.) Providence may for a time seem to go quite contrary to the

saints' prayers, and yet afterwards come to meet exactly. It is an astonishing piece of providence that the saints sometimes meet with, namely, that a case never is more hopeless than just after they have had a particular concern upon their spirits before the Lord about it; so that they are made to say, as Psal. lxv. 5. 'By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation.' But it is very usual in the Lord's dealings with his people to pass a sentence of death on their mercies ere they get them, as he did with the Israelites in Egypt, who were worse treated by Pharaoh after the application made to him to let them go, than before, Exod. v. ult. Providence acts like a man that is to fetch a stroke, swinging the axe back, that he may come forward with the greater vigour.

(4.) Providence often very discernibly keeps pace with the prayers of his people, that as they go up or down, so it goes. An eminent instance whereof we have Exod. xvii. 11. in that while Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. Hence sometimes a matter will go fairly on, while the soul is helped to believe and wrestle; but when unbelief makes the soul fag, the wheel begins to stand too. And it is no wonder this takes place, where the same Spirit is in the creature, and in the wheel.

(5.) *Lastly*, Providence may sweetly harmonize with the spirit of prayer, and the believer's expression in prayer, and yet not with the desires of their own spirit, which perhaps they went to lay before the Lord, Rom. viii. 26, 27. The not distinguishing of these two makes many see a great jarring betwixt providence and their prayers, while in very deed there is a notable harmony betwixt them. And if they would carefully mark the words in which, under the influence of the Spirit, they presented their petitions to the Lord, they might find them wonderfully agree with the dispensation of providence, though not with the desire of their own spirits.

IV. I proceed, in the next place, to assign reasons why Christians should wisely observe providences.

1. Because they are God's works, Psal. cxxxv. 6. The world, in the framing of it, was not a work of chance; neither is it so in the management of it. Whoever be the instruments and second causes by which any thing falls out in our lot, God has the guiding of the wheels, and has a negative on the whole creation, Lam. iii. 37. 'Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?' Meet me with a favourable event? we are debtors to God for it, As Abraham's servant acknowledged, on the favourable answer he received relating to Rebekah, in his bowing

his head, and worshipping the Lord, Gen. xxiv. 26. Do we meet with a cross one? It is the finger of God, though we see a creature's whole hand in it, Amos iii. 6. 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' Now, seeing they are his works, they ought to be observed.

2. Because they are great works, Psal. cxi. 2. 'The work of the Lord is great.' Every work of providence bears the signature of a divine hand upon it. But the stamp is sometimes so fine, and our eyes so dull, that we are slow to perceive it. I told you that there are small lines of providence as well as great: but the great God does nothing but what is great and suitable to himself. Though some of his works are comparatively small, they are all great absolutely. And therefore with respect to those I called small ones, I must say to you, as Deut. i. 17. 'Ye shall hear the small as well as the great.' And good reason is there for it. For,

(1.) The smaller a piece of work is, the greater and more curious is the workmanship. Galen confessed the hand, and extolled the wisdom of God in the thigh of a gnat. An ordinary artificer will fit out a mill; but the small wath requires a curious hand, and pictures of the least size shew most of the painter's skill. That frogs should have been a plague to Pharaoh, or Herod eaten up of worms, was more admirable, than if the one had been plagued with an armed host, and the other devoured by a lion. The rats devouring hats and poppies. (Turn. hist. Prov. chap. 112.) was truly more admirable than the conquests of Alexander and Cæsar both.

(2.) Great things may be lying hid in the bosom of very minute and ordinary things. Search into the rise of that wonderful turn of providence with the church in Esther's days, and ye shall find it to be the king's falling off his rest one night, Est. vi. 1. of that wonderful overthrow of the Moabites, and ye will find it a mere fancy, 2 Kings iii. 22, 23. The curse of God may be in the miscarrying of a basket of bread, Deut. xxviii. 17. And it may be big with a great mercy. They say the whale is mightily beholden to the little fish called *musculus*, which swims as a guide before her, without which she would be in danger in straits and betwixt great rocks. The little cloud like a man's hand often darkens the heavens ere all be done.

3. Because they are often very mysterious works, and therefore they need observation, Psal. xcii. 5. It is necessary to give us right views of providence, and to keep us from mistakes. The making judgment of providences is a very tender point, wherein the best of men have gone far wrong. Was not Jacob far out when he said, Gen. xlii. 36. 'All these things are against me,' if we compare

the promise, Rom. viii. 28. 'All things shall work together for good,' &c. and the event too? Many a time the outside of providence is very unlike it inside. The greatest cross may be wrapt up in what we take to be our greatest comfort; and the greatest comfort may be inwrapt in what we call our greatest cross. Observation must break the shell, that we may look in.

4. Because they are always perfect works. They will abide the strictest search and the most narrow inquiry, Deut. xxxii. 4. Whatever faults we find with them, as we do many, it is for want of due observation. But at length he shall gain that testimony and recantation, 'He hath done all things well,' Mark vii. 37. In these his works no flaw is to be found, no mistake; nothing too much, nothing too little; nothing too soon done, nothing too late done; nothing misplaced, nothing in or over; nay, nothing done that is not best done; nothing that man or angel could make better. The world will startle at this as a paradox: but faith will believe it, on the solid ground of infinite wisdom, though sense contradict it, Isa. xxxviii. 8. Jer. xii. 1. O that they who will debate this truth would come near and observe.

5. *Lastly*, Because they are speaking works, Micah vi. 9. They speak Heaven's language to the earth, and therefore should be observed. And they speak,

(1.) Of him, Psal. xix. 2. They preach to us that he is, what a God he is, how holy, just, wise, good, and powerful, &c. We may see there his perfections as in a glass. Each pile of grass speaks a God, a wise, good, and powerful one. So many creatures as there are, so many mouths to speak of him. And it is man's work to observe and hear. When God had replenished the heavens with sun, moon, and stars, and the earth with variety of creatures, the creation was still imperfect till man was made. For what avails the musical instrument, if there be nobody to play on it?

(2.) For him. Cross providences speak for him, Micah vi. 9. And favourable providences also, Rom. ii. 4. Hereby sinners are instructed in the way they should go, Psal. xxxii. 8. reproved, as Joseph's brethren; and comforted, as Paul was, Phil. ii. 27 And, in a word, they call us from sin unto God; by them, where the word goes before, Christ knocks at the door of sinners' hearts, and calls for access.

I come now to the improvement of this doctrine. And,

I. It may serve for lamentation. Ah! may we not say, Who is wise to observe these things? Wise observers of providence are thin sown in the world; because there are few exercised to godliness. God has given us enough to observe in the public and in our

private case. He is speaking by his providence to the land, he is speaking loudly at this day to the parish, to you and to me, and to every one in particular. But, alas! it is not observed to purpose. Graceless people are presumptuous, and will not observe; and even many godly are heedless, and do not observe. There are these six evidences that this wise observation of providence is very rare.

1. How many are there who see God no more in their mercies and crosses, than if they were a parcel of atheists, that did not think there were a God, or that believed no providence at all? If they get a mercy, God is not owned in it; they sacrifice to their own net. If they get a cross, they cry out by reason of the arm of the Almighty. But none saith, Where is God my Maker! In all the turns of their life and lot, they never seriously look to the wheel within the wheel.

2. How many are there to whom God in his providence is speaking plain language, that he who runs may read it, yet they will not understand it? Psal. lxxxii. 5. God plagues the Philistines for the ark most visibly, yet they are at a loss, saying, It may be it is a chance. Balaam's ass refuses to carry him forward on the way, but he is in a rage against her. God meets sinners in their way, with speaking providences; but on they go; they do not hear, they will not be stopped. Like the dog, they snarl at the stone, but look not to the hand that threw it.

3. How few are exercised to know the design of providences that they meet with? Many signal mercies they meet with, but put not the question, What is God saying to me by these things? Many a heavy dispensation they meet with, partly by the rod's hanging over their heads, partly by its lying on them; yet they never seriously take up Job's exercise, chap. x. 2. 'I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.' These things let them come and go with as little concern to know the design of them, as if they had none.

4. How few are exercised to comply with the design of providences, to accommodate themselves to the divine dispensations? Job xxxiii. 13, 14. If men were wise observers of providence, it would be their constant practice to be answering the several calls thereof, still facing about towards it, as the shadow on the dial to the body of the sun, Psal. xxvii. 8. 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' But, alas! men meet with humbling providences, but they are not exercised to mortify their pride: they meet with awakening providences, yet they are not exercised to rouse up themselves to their duty: they meet with afflicting providences in worldly things, yet they are not exer-

cised to get their hearts weaned from the world; they meet with reproving providences, yet they are not exercised to repent and mourn over the sins thereby pointed out. But they really strive with their Maker, and while he draws by his providence, they hold fast, and will not let it go, Jer. vi. 29.

5. The little skill that people have in judging of providences. A man will readily have skill in his own trade: but it is no wonder to see people unacquainted with things in which their business does not lie. O what commentaries on providence are in the world, that destroy the text! How miserably is the doctrine of particular dispensations perverted! Despisers of God and his ordinances are very easy; and therefore the world concludes, 'it is vain to serve God, and that there is no profit in keeping his ordinances,' Mal. iii. 14. 'The proud are called happy,' ver. 15. They are best that have least to do with them. Good men meet with signal strokes: the world concludes that they are hypocrites, and they must be guilty of some heinous wickedness beyond other people, Job v. 1. Luke xiii. 1, 2. And a thousand such blunders there are.

6. *Lastly*, They rank poverty in respect of Christian experience found among professors. What a learned Egyptian said to a Greek, *Vos Græci semper pueri*, may be said to many in whom there is some good thing towards the God of Israel. Ye professors are ever children, 2 Cor. iii. 1. Heb. v. 12. And what is the reason, but that we have never yet fallen close to the study of observing providences? See the text. There is a daily market in providence, but ye do no trade in it; and therefore ye are always poor. There is perhaps a lesson put in your hands this day, that ye had several years since, but ye did not learn it; and so it is now as great a mystery to you as then.

USE II. Of exhortation. O be exhorted to become wise observers of providence. O fall at length upon this piece of practical religion. Many of us have it, I fear, yet to begin; and all have need to mend their pace in it. For enforcing this exhortation, I shall give you some other points of doctrine from the words, by way of motives and direction, and so shut up this subject.

For motives take these doctrines.

1. Wise observing of providence is a rare thing in the world: *Who is wise, and will observe these things*, as the words may bear. And the reason is, the truth of religion is rare, and close and tender walking with God is yet rarer, Matth. xxii. 14. and xxv. 5. The most part of the world go the broad way to destruction, Matth. vii. 14. and therefore they are not concerned to observe the works of the Lord. Many Christians there are, that, alas! in these dregs of

time are not exercised Christians. Up then and be doing, and conspire not with the multitude to put a slight on God's speaking by his providence, lest his fury break forth as fire on you with the rest, John vi. 66.

The more rare the observing of providence is, it is the more precious. Stones may be gathered from the surface of the earth, while gold must be dug with much labour out of the bowels of it, The finest things are hardest to be won at: *Nulla virtus sine lapide.* As Christ himself had a stone rolled on him, so every grace, work, and way of Christ has one. But there is a pearl underneath; and the heavier the stone, the more precious is the pearl. Come and see in this particular.

II. They that are wise will be observers of providences, *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things.* And at what pitch your wisdom arrives, your observation of providences will follow it, Eccl. ii. 14. The eating of the forbidden fruit cast all mankind into a spiritual madness; and the truth is, the most part of the world are in that respect as madmen, regarding neither the word nor works of the Lord. But if thou wert come to thyself, it would not be so, Luke xv. 17. How long hast thou acted as a fool, in matters of greatest weight, being penny-wise and pound-foolish, careful for a mite, and in the meantime letting talents slip through thy fingers? Luke x. 41, 42.

O Sirs, how do unobserved providences aggravate our guilt, and increase our accounts! When the day shall come, the Lord will reckon with the sinner, for all the pains he has bestowed on him to bring him to himself: when his slighting the call of the word shall be aggravated with so many items of providences. How will the sinner look, when the Lord shall say, Did I not give thee such and such mercies to draw thee from thy sin? lay such and such crosses in thy way to drive thee from it? What hast thou done with all the instructive up-stirring providences I gave thee? with all the providential warnings, rebukes, &c. given thee? Remember that passage, Prov. ix. 12. 'If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.'

III. The wise observation of providences is a soul-enriching trade. *They shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* This is so on two accounts, both deducible from the text.

1. That which seems the most barren piece of providence, becomes fruitful by wise observation. Some of *these things* in the text are very cross providences; yet even by them one shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Behold a holy art, whereby ye may not only gather honey out of every sweet-smelling flower, but may gather grapes of spiritual profit off the thorns of afflictions, and figs

of thistles. The apostle tells us a mystery, of a pleasure in infirmities, distresses, &c. 2 Cor. xii. 10. Wise observation would let you into the secret.

2. It has the promise, in the text. God has said, such a one shall know more and feel more in religion than others. 'To him that hath (*i. e.* improves what he has) shall be given.' And the more a man sets himself to observe, the more he will get to observe, and the more sappy will his observations be. By the wise observation of providences,

(1.) Sin and duty in particular cases is discovered. No dispensations of providence whatsoever can warrant us to go over the belly of God's commands, 1 Sam. xiii. 11, &c. But where two lawful things are before us, providence may point out what is present duty, and which of them we are to choose. And so the word teacheth, Psal. xxxii. 8. 'I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.'

(2.) One gets a clear view of the divine authority of the scriptures, very necessary in such an age wherein atheism, profaneness, and immorality so much abound. For the wise observer sees the fulfilling of it exactly, and so is confirmed. While he observes providences, he sees scripture-doctrines, promises, threatenings, and prophecies accomplished, and the parallels of scripture-examples; and so reads the truth of God's word in his works, Psal. lviii. 11.

(3.) Hereby a Christian is established in the good ways of the Lord, and that by those very things that make others to stagger, yea, themselves also, when they do not observe, Psal. lxxiii. 22, &c. It is the woful estrangedness to this exercise that makes so many here-away there-away professors, tossed about with every wind that rises, while amidst all these reelings the wise observer sits firm like the expert mariner among the boisterous waves, Psal. cxliii. 5.

(4.) Hereby a Christian gets store of experiences, to lay by him for use at another time. How did Joseph sustain Egypt in time of the dearth, but by the corn laid up in time of plenty? So the Psalmist says, 'O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar,' Psalm xlii. 6. But for want of this some people are always from hand to mouth, always to begin; ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth, Mark vi. 52.

(5.) *Lastly*, It is a nurse to all the graces of the Spirit. It is a notable help to faith, Exod. xiv. ult. A short-limbed faith will reach far up, when it stands upon experiences.—To love; see the text. Now, the love of God perceived kindles the flame of love in us.—To patience and waiting on the Lord; for observation will keep them from being hasty while the work is on the wheel, Psal.

xxxvii. 2.—To hope; 'for experience worketh hope,' Rom. v. 4; for former mercies are pledges of future ones.—To contempt of the world.—To holy fear, Exod. xiv. ult.—To delight and joy in the Lord, Psal. xcii. 4.—To self-loathing, and thankfulness, Psal. cxliv. 1, 2, 3, &c.

And now for direction take this doctrine, *There is need of true wisdom to fit a man for right observation of providence.* And that wisdom is,

1. Spiritual wisdom, 1 Cor. ii. 15. Carnal wisdom is no good observer of providence, as the blind man is no fit judge of colours.

2. Scripture wisdom; for the scripture is the pattern, and providence the work. They that study the language of Heaven in providence, must consult the scriptures as the dictionary for that language.

3. Practical wisdom, Psal. cxi. 2. Even scripture-notions floating in the head will do but little service, but sinking into the heart, reduced into practice, will be of good use here. And the more to fit you for this work, take these following lessons from the word concerning providences.

(1.) The design of Providence may sometimes lie very hid; and therefore it is good to wait, and not to be rash, Psal. lxxvii. 19.

(2.) Sometimes providence seems to forget the promise; but it is not so, but only the time of the promise is not then come, Gen. xv. 4. with xvi. 2.

(3.) Sometimes providence seems to go quite cross to the promise, and his work to go contrary to his word. But wait ye, they will assuredly meet, Gen. xxii.

(4.) Ofttimes providence favours a design, which yet will be blasted in the end, for that it was not the purpose of God, Jonah i. 3.

(5.) Ofttimes providence will run counter in appearance to the real design, and by a tract of dispensations will seem to cross it more and more, till the grave-stone appear to be laid on it. And yet, 'at evening-time it shall be light,' Zech. xiv. 7.

(6.) Providence many times lays aside the most likely means and brings about his work by that which nothing is expected of, 2 Kings v. 11, 12.

(7.) *Lastly*, Sometimes providence works by contraries, as the blind man was cured with laying clay on his eyes.

Learn to live by faith, and be frequent in meditation and self-examination, and be much in prayer.

Thus I have laid before you the duty of observing providences. May the Lord pity them that make no conscience of practising what they hear, and get nothing of all but a testimony against themselves. And may he give us all understanding in all things.

OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

GEN. ii. 16, 17.—*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

HAVING already shown, that God from all eternity decreed whatever comes to pass; that he executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence; that he made all things of nothing by the word of his power; that he made man upright, adorned with his moral image, consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; and that his providence, extends to all his creatures, and all their actions: that which now falls to be considered is the special act of providence which God exercised towards man, in the estate wherein he was created, namely, the covenant of works which God made with Adam. This covenant is sometimes called *the covenant of works*, because works, or obedience, was the condition of it; and sometimes *the covenant of life*, because life was promised therein as the reward of obedience.

In discoursing from this subject, I shall,

I. Shew that God made a covenant with Adam, when he created him in a state of innocency.

II. Explain the nature of this covenant.

III. Shew why God entered into this covenant with man.

IV. Make improvement.

I. That God made a covenant with Adam when he had created him in a state of innocency, appears from this text with the context. For here are the parties contracting, God and man.

1. Here is the duty which God requires of man, *not eating of the forbidden fruit;* which was no command of the natural law, but superadded thereto, and implied his obligation to observe that law much more.

2. A threatening in case man should break this positive law, *Thou shalt die.*

3. A promise of life in case of continued obedience. For the threatening manifestly implies another proposition, viz. 'If thou eat not of this tree thou shalt live.' Besides, the license the Lord gives him to eat of every other tree in the garden, and so of the tree of life, imports this promise.

4. Man's accepting of the terms. This is left to be gathered from the proposal of it by the Lord to innocent man, who would refuse

no terms that a bountiful God proposed. He objected not against the condition; he betook himself to the privilege of the covenant, eating of the other trees of the garden. Eve owns it, Gen. iii. 3. 'Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' And when they had eaten of this forbidden fruit, their consciences terrified them, ver. 8. 'Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.' No wonder that Moses with a running pen describes this transaction, which, as to its being the way of salvation then proposed, passed as a flying shadow. Thus this covenant appears from the text.

To confirm this, consider that the scripture speaks of two covenants, Gal. iv. 24. the one of grace, and therefore the other of works. See also Hos. vi. 7. 'They like men have transgressed the covenant.' The Hebrew bears, *as Adam*. It is the same word that occurs, Job xxxi. 33. 'If I have covered my transgressions as Adam. This will further appear while we shew,

II. The nature of this covenant. Wherein consider,

First, The parties covenanting. On the one hand was God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, man Creator and Sovereign Lord, who is the great Lawgiver, and withal good, and communicative of his goodness to his creatures. On the other part was man, God's creature; Adam, representing all mankind, and covenanting with God, not only for himself, but for all his posterity, as the natural father of all, of whose one blood nations of men were to be made, Acts xvii. 26. and the appointed federal head; which is clear from the imputation of his sin to all, Gen. ii. 17.' 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' Compare Rom. v. 12. 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' There was no mediator in this covenant; nor was there need of any: for man was as yet the holy friend of God, and his service while he stood was acceptable to God, as being fully conformable to his own law, in which he could not but delight, as in his own image.

Secondly, The condition of that covenant was perfect obedience, which God required of Adam, Gal. iii. 10, 12, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.—And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doth them shall live in them.' The tenor of this covenant was, 'Do this and live.' Where three things are to be considered.

1. The law, which was to be the rule of that obedience; which is twofold. (1.) The moral law, or the law of the ten commandments, as the apostle explains it, Gal. iii. 10. forecited. It is true, Adam

had not this law written on tables of stone, but it was written in his heart; the knowledge of it was concreated with him, so that he naturally knew it, being made upright; which he could not be without this, Eccl. vii. 29. Yea, this law is in part written on man's heart after the fall, as appears from Rom. ii. 15. Much more was it written on Adam's heart before the fall. This law is the perpetual rule of righteousness. (2.) There was the positive symbolical law, of not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This law was revealed to Adam in the text, neither could he otherwise have known it; it being no part of the law of nature, but a thing in itself altogether indifferent, and depending merely on the will of God, who could have appointed otherwise. Only, as the natural or moral law obliged him to this, seeing it commands the creature to obey God's will in all things; so by this his respect to the moral law was manifested; for as in not eating he testified his supreme love and obedience to God, so in eating of it he rejected the sweet yoke of God, and took on that of the devil.

2. The nature of the obedience that was in the condition of this covenant. It behoved to be perfect.

(1.) In respect of the principle of it. So the law requires men to 'love the Lord with all the heart.' It required not only external obedience, refraining from the thing forbidden; but internal obedience, which behoved to proceed from a disposition of soul bent towards God, in which there was no blemish, and altogether free and unconstrained without any reluctancy from within. And this implies, that the glory of God behoved to be man's chief end in all his actions, without having the least squint look to any other as his chief end.

(2.) Perfect in parts extending to all the commands of God whatsoever that were given him, Gal. iii. 10. with respect to his thoughts, words, and actions. He was to do nothing that God prohibited, and to omit nothing that he commanded. He was to fulfil all righteousness, and his obedience was to be as broad as the law. Every commandment, without the least exception as to one tittle, was to be obeyed to the fullest extent.

(3.) Perfect in degrees. He was to 'love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind,' Matt. xxii. 37. Every act of obedience behoved to be perfect in degrees, wanting nothing of that perfection which the law required. Every action performed by him behoved to be screwed up to the pitch determined in the law, without falling short of it in the least punctilio. All that was lower than that height required, was to be rejected as sinful; and the least flaw spoiled the whole.

(4.) Perfect in duration or continuance, without interruption, while God should have kept him in the state of trial, Gal. iii. 10. This state could not have been for ever, without rendering the promise of life fruitless; for to make a promise necessarily implies that a time is set for obtaining the reward promised to the obedience; and if Adam was to continue in a perpetual state of trial, he could never have obtained the reward of his obedience. The time of this probation is not mentioned in the Bible. Probably it was not to be very long. And perhaps the devil, knowing the benignity and goodness of the Creator to his upright creature man, that he would not keep him long in a state liable to mutability, was incited to attack him so very early as on the day of his creation, in order to prevent his confirmation in an upright estate.

This and no less was the condition of that covenant. On no other terms could he attain to eternal happiness by it, or be justified in respect of his state before the Lord, though he might in respect of particular actions.

Hence it appears, that sincere obedience could not have been accepted, if it was not altogether perfect; nothing could be accepted, but an obedience altogether without fault or blemish; and that there was no place for repentance under this covenant; no sorrow for transgressing in the least instance could be admitted: for the threatening was peremptory, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' Such a positive denunciation cut off all hope, and rendered repentance of no avail.

3. Adam's power to perform the obedience required. He was able to answer all the demands of that covenant, being *made upright*, Eccl. vii. 29. and in the image of God. There was light in his understanding, sanctity in his will, and rectitude in his affections; there was such an harmony among all his faculties, that his members yielded to his affections, his affections to his will, his will obeyed his reason, and his reason was subject to the law of God. Had he not then sufficient knowledge of his duty? and was he not invested with full power to perform the obedience required of him? Besides, it was not consistent with the justice and goodness of God to have required that of his creature, which he had not given him power to perform. The case is quite otherwise with respect to us in our lapsed state, for we have lost the power of yielding obedience to God's law in Adam. But let it be remembered, that though we are utterly unable to obey, yet God has not lost his right to demand obedience; which should induce us to betake ourselves to the second covenant, where every thing is freely given, and the will accepted for the deed.

Thirdly, The promise of the covenant was life, and therefore it is called *the covenant of life*. Now, a threefold life was promised.

1. Natural life, consisting in the union of the soul with the body, which should have been continued without death, if Adam had not sinned, Gen. iii. 19. Though man's body was made of dust, yet, by virtue of the covenant-promise, it would have been secured from mingling with its original materials. As it was created without any principle of death, so it was not susceptive of any hazard from that quarter, as long as the covenant should be observed. His natural life would have remained in constant vigour, without languishing or decay: And he would have enjoyed the comfort of this life pure and unmixed without any of those evils, miseries and inconveniencies, which now overspread the world.

2. Spiritual life, consisting in the union of the soul with God. Man's soul was, and is in its own nature, immaterial and immortal, not liable to dissolution. It was endued with spiritual life at its creation, living in union and communion with God, and adorned with his image, consisting in righteousness and holiness. This image of God would have been continued in him. His knowledge of God and his duty would not have failed; nor would the righteousness of his will, or the purity and regularity of his affections have decayed. He would still have been the friend of God, and the favourite of heaven; and would never have been without the most lively marks of the love and friendship of his covenant God. He would have had ready access to God, without any eclipse of the divine favour; and the utmost pleasure and satisfaction in doing his duty, which would have been a continual feast to him.

3. Eternal life, or the glorious happiness of heaven. He should have been confirmed in his holy and happy estate beyond the hazard or possibility of sinning, or forfeiting it.—Though he was created mutable, and mutability is woven into the very nature of the creature, yet having finished the time allotted for his probation, he would have been secured from actual liableness to change for ever. His body would have been absolutely and for ever secured against hazard of death, or hurt from external accidents or injuries. He would have been confirmed in the love and favour of God for ever, without any hazard of falling out of it. The sun of favour from God would have shone upon him, without ever setting. And after the time of his trial was over, he would have been transported, soul and body, into the heavenly paradise, there to abide for ever. He would not have always lived in the earthly paradise, where he was to eat, drink, and sleep, but have been carried to the celestial paradise, where the happy inhabitants live as the angels of

God. This is plain, if he consider that application of the covenant of works, Matth. xix. 16, 17.—'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' Here Christ holds forth eternal life as the promise of this covenant, to be had on the performance of the condition. The weakness of the law to give eternal life now, ariseth only from the flesh, that is, the corruption of nature, whereby we are unable to fulfil the condition of it, Rom. viii. 3. 'It was eternal life that Christ purchased for his people, and that as he was made under the law, by which he obtained that very life to them, which otherwise they should have had, if man had not sinned, Rom. viii. 3, 4. Gal. iv. 4, 5. Besides, eternal death was threatened; and the goodness of God uses not to propose greater punishments than rewards. And if it had not been so, man had nothing to expect more than he had when created, and set down in paradise.

Fourthly, The penalty of this covenant, in case of disobedience, was death; natural, consisting in the separation of the body from the soul; spiritual, in the separation of the soul from God, a death in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1; and eternal, in the separation of both body and soul from God for ever in hell, Matt. xxv. 41. Man's body had never died had he not sinned, for 'the wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. ult. and far less his soul, which would have flourished in all the beauty of spiritual verdure and vigour for ever. But it may be asked, How was the threatening accomplished, when Adam lived so long after his fatal transgression? I answer, That day that he sinned he died spiritually. His soul was divested of the image of God that was stamped upon it at its creation; his understanding became dark, his will rebellious, and his affections impure and irregular. He lost the favour of his Maker, and he was exposed to the wrath of God, as a mark at which the arrows of the divine displeasure were to be levelled. That this spiritual death was inflicted upon man immediately after his foul transgression, is evident from those gripes and throws of conscience that seized him, which made him hide himself from God amidst the trees of the garden. And this of course would have actually terminated in eternal death in hell, had not a Mediator been provided, who found man bound with these cords of death as a malefactor bound to the execution. And as for his natural life, that day he sinned, he got his death's wounds, of which he afterwards died; that day he became mortal, and his body liable to sickness, disease, pain, and every other harbinger of death. The crown of immortality, which he held of his Creator, by virtue of the covenant made with him, fell from off his head, and he became a subject of the king of terrors. He became liable to all those cords wherewith death binds his pri-

soners. So that he was as sure a dead man as if dead already, though the execution of the sentence was delayed, because of his posterity which were in his loins, and because another covenant was prepared, by which the life and happiness forfeited by the breach of the first covenant, was to be recovered, and that with great advantage.

Fifthly, We may consider how the covenant of works was confirmed. It hath pleased God to append seals to his covenants with men; and this covenant seems not to have wanted some things intended sacramentally to confirm it. Among which may be reckoned,

1. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Gen. ii. 17. What sort of a tree it was, the scripture does not determine. But whatever it was, it was not so called, as having any virtue or power to make men wise; that was the devil's divinity, Gen. iii. 5. who told Eve, that if they eat of it, *they should be as gods;* but he was a liar from the beginning, John viii. 44.: but it was called so, because by it they knew to their fatal experience the happy state they fell from, and the woful misery that fall plunged them into. It obtained that name, because it was a warning-sign to them to beware of the experimental knowledge of evil, as they knew good. They had special acquaintance with good in all its charming kinds; and this tree was set before them as a beacon to warn them from looking after the knowledge of evil, which, like a dangerous rock, would dash them to pieces, if they split upon it. And it served to confirm the covenant, and the happiness of their primitive state; inasmuch as in the threatening relative to this tree was included a promise, that as long as they kept from eating of its prohibited fruit, they should never die. And hence we may gather, which is no improbable opinion, that our first parents could fall by no other transgression than eating of this tree. And the devil that finished master of craft and subtility, attacked them in this quarter, as the only side on which he could promise himself success. And alas for poor man! Satan's stratagem succeeded, to the ruin of the whole human race.

2. The tree of life, Gen. ii. 9. Though we have ground to think that this tree might be an excellent means of preserving the vigour of bodily life, as other trees in the garden also were, yet it could have no virtue in itself of making man every way immortal. But it seems to have been called *the tree of life* by reason of its signification being appointed of God as a sacrament, by eating whereof he should have been confirmed in the belief of the promise of life natural being continued, of spiritual life perpetuated, and eternal life to be enjoyed in heaven; which was the main thing, and included

the other two, Gen. iii. 22. 'And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever,' he must be driven out; denoting, that man, by sin, having lost his right to eternal life signified by this tree, was driven out, Rev. ii. 7. that he might not profane the sacrament of it, to which he had now no more right. The words do not mean, that if Adam had eaten of the tree of life after his fall, he should retrieve his forfeited life; this being impossible, because the threatening was express, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;* and that the tree of life had no such virtue and efficacy in itself, and ceased to be a sacrament of the covenant of works the moment man sinned. It was intended to assure and persuade him of life upon performing the condition; but the covenant being broken that assurance and persuasion actually fell of course. The whole verse may be read thus, *Behold the man who was one of us, to know good and evil: and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, that he may live for ever.* Where three things are very plain. (2.) There is no irony or scoff here, as if God should say, Behold the man has attempted to become like one of us, to know good and evil; but how shamefully has he failed of his design! but, on the contrary, a most pathetic lamentation over fallen man. This sentence is evidently broken off abruptly, the words, *I will drive him out,* being suppressed; even as in the case of a father, who, with sighs and sobs, puts his offending child out of doors. (2.) It was God's design to prevent Adam's eating of the tree of life, as he had eaten of the forbidden tree; thereby mercifully taking care, that our fallen father, who had now got a revelation of the covenant of grace, might not, according to the corrupt natural inclination of men since the fall, run back to the covenant of works for life and salvation, by partaking of the tree of life, a sacrament of that covenant, and so reject the covenant of grace, by the eating of that tree now, as he had before broken the covenant of works, by the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (3.) At this time Adam imagined, that by the eating of the tree of life he might recover his forfeited life, and so live for ever.

III. I come now to shew why God entered into this covenant with man. I know no reason can be given for this, but what must be resolved into the glory of the grace and goodness of God. It was certainly an act of grace and admirable condescension in God, to enter into a covenant with his own creature. Man was not at his own but God's disposal; nor had he any thing to work with but what he had from God; so that there was no proportion betwixt the work enjoined and the reward promised. Man before that cove-

nant was bound, but God was free: for man was under the law of nature before he was under the covenant; for the law was created with him, that is, he was no sooner a rational creature than he was under the law; but this covenant was not made with him till after he was brought into the garden to dress it. Before that covenant God was free to dispose of man as he saw fit, however perfectly he kept the law; but when in the covenant he made the promise of conferring life upon Adam in case of continued obedience, during the time set for his trial, then he was debtor to his own faithfulness, which is necessarily engaged to perform whatever he hath promised. Again, death was the natural wages of sin, though there had been no covenant, and that by the rule of justice, which plainly requires that man should be dealt with as he has done. But man having given consent, however tacit, and not expressed in so many words, which yet is equivalent to a formal consent to the covenant, implying the threatening, the Lord proceeds not by simple justice, but by express formal covenant, in punishing for the breach of it. But we may consider the reason of God the Almighty Creator and Lawgiver's entering into a covenant with man a little more particularly, and that to the end our hearts may be impressed with a just sense of the glorious perfections of the great God, and the great goodness shewn to man in that whole transaction. I say, then, that God was pleased to deal with man by way of covenant, for two very important ends, the manifestation of his own glory, and man's greater good.

1. For his own glory, which is the supreme end of all his actions. More particularly,

(1.) To display the lustre of his manifold or variegated wisdom, Eph. iii. 10. This way of dealing was the most effectual method for securing man's obedience: for the covenant being a mutual engagement between God and his creature, as it gave him infallible assurance to strengthen his faith, so it was the sweetest bond to preserve his felicity. Divine wisdom shines clearly, in suiting the method of dealing to the nature of the reasonable creature, which was to be led with its own consent. It is true the precept alone is binding upon man by virtue of the authority of the imposer; but man's own consent increases the obligation, twisting the cords of the law and binding them more strongly to obedience. Thus Adam was God's servant by the condition of his nature, and also by his own choice, accepting the covenant, from which he could not recede, without the guilt and infamy of the worst perfidy. The terms of the covenant were such as became the parties concerned, God and man: it established an inseparable connection between duty and

happiness; as is plain from the sanction, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

(2.) To shew his wonderful moderation. For though he be Sovereign Monarch of the world, and has absolute power over all creatures to dispose of them as he pleases; yet, in covenanting with man, he sweetly tempered his supremacy and sovereign power, seeking as it were to reign with man's consent. And when, by virtue of his sovereign authority and absolute right, he might have enjoined harder terms to man, and those too altogether just and righteous, he chose to use so much moderation, that he would require nothing of man, but that which man himself should judge, and behoved in reason to be a just and easy yoke; and which, in accepting the terms, he acknowledged to be such.

(3.) For the praise of the glory of his grace. It was free condescension on God's part to make such a promise to man's obedience. He might have required obedience from him by virtue of his sovereignty, as his Lord and Maker, without binding himself by any promise to reward his service. All that he was capable to do was but mere duty to his Creator; and when he had done all that was commanded him, it was no more than what he was bound to do as God's creature. It was simply impossible for man to merit any thing at God's hand. It must be owned, there was much grace in this transaction, in that God entered into terms of agreement with man, not his equal, but his own creature, and the work of his hands; and in promising him a reward for his service, which was due to God by the law of creation previous to that federal deed, and so great a reward, even eternal life, between which and the work there was no proportion.

(4.) For venting his boundless love in the communications of his goodness to man. For God did not create man or angels because he needed them, but that there might be proper objects for receiving the displays of his goodness. Nor did he enter into a covenant with man from any natural necessity, but on design of communicating his bounty to him, Deut. vii. 7, 8. Ezek. xvi. 8. Though the Lord might have exacted all that obedience and service from man, which possibly he could yield, and reduced him into his first nothing by annihilation at last, or at least not have bestowed everlasting happiness upon him, not bound himself by covenant whereby he might expect it; yet, to shew the greatness of his goodness and love, he chose a way to reward that service in a most bountiful manner, which otherwise was due to him.

(5.) For the manifestation of his truth and faithfulness in keeping covenant with his creature, which could not otherwise have been

so gloriously discovered. God had made illustrious displays of his wisdom, power, and goodness, in the creation of all things, and in that excellent piece of workmanship, man, the chief of his works in this world; but his faithfulness and veracity could not have been known, at least in its effects, without some such transaction.

(6.) That he might be the more cleared and justified in resenting the injuries done him by the disobedience of his creature, with whom he had condescended to deal so graciously. For the more condescension and goodness there is on God's part, the greater ingratitude appears on man's part in trampling on the divine goodness. But,

2. God condescended to enter into covenant with man for man's greater good.

(1.) That thereby he might put the higher honour upon him. It was indeed a very distinguishing respect put upon man to be an ally of heaven, and the confederate friend of God. If it be an honour for a mean country peasant to be joined in a formal bond of friendship with a prince or potentate on earth, how much greater honour and dignity was it unto man to be joined in a bond of love and friendship with God, the Supreme Monarch of the whole world?

(2.) To bind him the faster to his duty. The Lord knew man's mutable state, and how slippery and inconstant the heart of man is, where confirming grace is not vouchsafed; therefore, to prevent this inconstancy incident to man, a finite creature, and to establish him in his obedience, he laid him under a covenant-obligation to his service. Man was bound to obey God by virtue of his creation; but his making a covenant with man which he willingly consented to, was a superadded tie to bind him the faster to his duty. By the covenant that was made with Adam, he had a kind of help to make him the more careful to observe the law which was written on his heart, and a prop to make him stand the more fixed and steady. For, on the one hand, he was warned of his danger in case of disobedience, that so he might beware of offending God; and, on the other he was encouraged to serve his Maker with the greater alacrity, from the greatness of the reward set before him, and the greatness of the punishment threatened in case he should disobey: both which tended notably to incline him to constancy in his duty.

(3.) That his obedience might be more cheerful, being that unto which he had willingly tied himself. God chose to rule man by his own consent, rather than by force. An absolute law might have extorted obedience from man, but a covenant made it appear more free and willing. It made man's obedience look as if it were the result of his own choice, rather than of any obligation lying upon

him. This tended much to the honour of God; for one volunteer that goeth to the war, doth honour the service more than ten soldiers pressed by force.

(4.) For his greater comfort and encouragement. By this he might clearly see what he might expect from God as a reward of his diligence and activity in his service.

(5.) That he might manifest himself to him, and deal with him the more familiarly. The dealing by way of covenant is the way of dealing betwixt man and man that hath least of distance in it, and most of familiarity, wherein parties come near to each other with greatest freedom. There is more nearness and familiarity in this than in any other way whereby God hath expressed his will. It is a more familiar way than that of commands and precepts, which imports nothing but authority and sovereignty. Yea, it is more familiar than the way of absolute promises, which might indeed set forth God's abundant goodness, but not so much God's familiar condescension, as the way of a covenant, when so great and so glorious a Majesty stoops to treat and deal by reciprocal engagements with so mean a creature as man, who is sprung of dust.

I come now to make some practical improvement of this subject.

1. See here the great and wonderful condescension of God, who was pleased to stoop so low as to enter into a covenant with his own creature. Though he is infinitely great and glorious in himself, the fountain of his own blessedness, the glass of his own beauty, and the throne of his own glory; yet he condescended to treat with mean man in a way of covenant. How astonishing is it that God should make a covenant with dust and ashes; and that he should bind himself to man, to give him life and happiness as the reward of his obedience, which he owed to God by the law of his creation?

2. See what a glorious condition man was in when God entered into a covenant with him. He was placed in a pleasant and delightful place, where he was furnished with every conveniency he could desire. He was conformed to God in holiness. Light sparkled in his understanding, sanctity shined in his will, and his affections were regular and pure. He had familiar intimacy and communion with his Maker, and conversed as freely with him as a favourite with his prince. As he enjoyed the light of the sun in paradise to cherish and refresh his body, so he had the light of God's countenance to solace and delight his soul. Thus happy was man: but, ah! he is now fallen like a star from heaven.

3. See that God is very just in all that comes on man. He set him up with a good stock, in a noble case, making him his covenant-party. He gave him the noblest undeserved encouragement to con-

tinue in his obedience, and told him his hazard if he should disobey. So that falling he is left without excuse, his misery being entirely owing to himself.

4. See the deplorable condition of all Adam's posterity by reason of the breach of this covenant. They are under the curse of the law, which is an universal curse, and discharges its thunder against every person who is naturally under that covenant, and has not changed his state.

5. This serves to humble all flesh, and beat down the pride of all created glory, under the serious consideration of the great loss we have sustained by Adam's fall, and the sad effects thereof upon us. We have lost all that is good and valuable, the image and favour of God, and have incurred the wrath and displeasure of a holy God.

6. See the unsearchable riches of divine grace, in providing a better covenant for the recovery and salvation of fallen man. The duty of the first covenant is now impossible, and the penalty of it intolerable. It admits of no repentance, nor accepts of any short endeavours; but leaves sinful man as a malefactor in the hands of the law. Blessed be God for the revelation of the covenant of grace, wherein life and salvation is freely provided and offered to fallen man through the obedience and satisfaction of the second Adam. Well may it be called a covenant of grace: for it came from the rich and free grace of God, as its true spring; it is all bespangled with gracious promises, as the heavens are with stars; and all the blessings contained in it are gratuitous and free, such as men cannot plead any right or title unto by any merit or works of their own. When the angels sinned, God expelled them from heaven, and left them to perish in their misery; but he was graciously pleased to enter into a covenant with his Son, as second Adam, for the recovery of fallen man, who by his obedience and death hath fulfilled the law, and suffered the penalty thereof, and thereby made ample provision for all the wants and miseries of poor sinners.

7. There is no wonder, that however little good is wrought in the world, yet working to win heaven is so frequent. We have sufficient evidence of the covenant of works being made with man as a public person, seeing it is yet natural to us to do that we may live, and to think that God will accept us for our works' sake.

8. See your misery, all ye that are out of Christ. This covenant is your way to heaven, which is now impossible. Tell not of your good meanings and desires, your repentance, and your obedience, such as it is; and think not to get life, salvation, and acceptance thereby. For the covenant ye are under admits of no repentance, no will for the deed. It requires nothing less than perfect obedience, which ye are incapable to give.

9. *Lastly*, Therefore give over this way of seeking life by the broken covenant of works, and come to the Lord Jesus Christ; lay hold on the better covenant, and come up to Christ's chariot, Cant. iii. 9, 10. which will drive you safely to eternal life and glory. That chariot which the first Adam drove, went not far till it was all shattered, and made unfit to carry any to heaven. It breaks with the weight of the least sin; and so ye can never think it will drive to heaven with you, Rom. viii. But come into the chariot of the covenant of grace, and ye will be safely carried in it to the land of eternal rest and glory*.

OF THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.

GEN. III. 6, 7.—*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

GOD made man upright, but he sought out many inventions. Man being in honour, abode not. He soon fell from the happy and holy state in which he was created.

In the text we have three things to be considered.

1. The fall of our first parents from their state of primitive integrity; it was by their both eating of the forbidden fruit, and consequently sinning against God, ver. 6. And they were immediately sensible that they were fallen from that holy and happy state, ver. 7. This appears two ways. (1.) By their knowledge of their nakedness. Some suppose, that their bodies, before their fall, had a divine glory and lustre on them, which was immediately taken away when they sinned, and they saw that this beautiful covering was now gone. Most part of interpreters understand it of their seeing their nakedness with grief and shame, from a sense of their guilt contracted, and of that sinful concupiscence they found now working in them. Thus the eyes of their minds were opened, which Satan had blinded before. (2.) By their going about to cover their

* A more full and particular account of the covenant of works may be seen in the author's treatise on that subject, first published in 1772, being a work composed posterior to these catechetical discourses.

bodies with the broad leaves of the fig-tree. All this clearly holds forth their sense, though it was no holy sense, of their shameful fall.

2. That action by which they fell, their sinning against God, ver. 6. viz. by eating the forbidden fruit. They broke God's express command, forbidding them, under pain of death, to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And immediately after this wicked deed they saw they were naked.

3. How they fell. They fell of their own free-will being left to their freedom, ver. 6. *The woman saw that the tree was good for food, &c.* There was no force or compulsion here; all proceeded from free choice. Their eyes saw the fruit, their hearts coveted it, their hands took it, and their mouths ate it.

The doctrinal truth deducible from the text is,

Doct. 'Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created by sinning against God.'

Two things are here to be considered.

I. The fall of our first parents.

II. How or what way they fell.

I. Let us consider the fall of our first parents. And here I will shew,

1. That man is fallen.

2. Whereby he fell, or what cast him down.

3. What he fell from.

First, I am to shew that man is fallen, and that our first parents did not continue in the estate wherein they were created, but fell from it. This is clear,

1. From the express narrative of this fatal event given by Moses, Gen. iii. from which it appears, that the devil entering into a serpent, artfully tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, in direct opposition to the express command of God, prohibiting it under a dreadful penalty; that she prevailed upon Adam to follow her example; that they were both immediately stung with remorse and horror for what they had done; and perceiving themselves to be naked, they fell a-sewing fig-leaves together for a covering to their bodies; that hearing the voice of the Lord God in the garden, they did, as an evidence of their guilt, and of the privation of light in their minds, hide themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden; that being called to account for their conduct, the woman threw the blame on the serpent, and the man on the woman; and that both received sentence from their offended Creator and Judge, expressive of their future misery; though at the same time God was pleased to give them a revelation of the method

of salvation by a Redeemer, in the promise respecting the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head. All this amounts to a plain proof that man has fallen from the holy and happy state he was placed in at his creation.

2. From the doleful experience of their posterity, Rom. v. 12. 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all man, for that all have sinned.' When we see the whole race of mankind born beggars, surely we may conclude that their father became bankrupt; for he once had a happy portion to transmit to his posterity, which he foolishly squandered away. And the misery attending upon us now, is, that we are pursued for our father's debt as well as our own, without having a farthing to pay.

Secondly, We may inquire, How did Adam fall, or what cast him down? It was his sinning against God. While our first parents held with God, they stood; but when they departed from him, they fell. What their sin was more particularly, will fall to be shewn afterwards. They thought to rise by their sin, affecting to be as gods, Gen. iii. 5, 6. but it was their ruin. Seeking more they lost what they had.

Thirdly, It may be asked, What did they fall from? The state wherein they were created. Now, this was a state of the greatest holiness and felicity. When they sinned,

1. They fell from a holy into a sinful state. They lost the image of God. Observe the opposition betwixt the image of God and that of Adam, Gen. v. 1, 3. There we are told, 'that God made man in his own likeness,' or image; and that Adam beget a son 'in his own likeness,' even Seth, from whom the whole human race is sprung. Sin was a turning from God as their chief end, and making themselves their chief end; whereby all their uprightness behoved to be lost. It broke the whole law of God at one touch, and violently struck against God and man's neighbour, that is, his posterity; and so could not but waste and defile the conscience. This was the sense of the threatening, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' And in this unholy state are all born of the first man.

(1.) They lost their knowledge, and fell under horrible blindness. Witness their fig-leaf cover for shrouding their nakedness, and their hiding themselves from the presence of the Lord, Gen. iii. 7, 8. A plain indication of their falling into dreadful ignorance of the Divine Being, the opposite of that great knowledge they had of him in their primitive state of integrity.

(2.) They lost the righteousness of their will, Eccl. vii. 29. And

they fell under an aversion to God. Witness their running away from him, ver. 8. their excusing their sin, transferring the guilt every one off themselves, till it landed at length on God himself, ver. 12.

(3.) They lost the holiness of their affections, which immediately fell into confusion and disorder. Witness their covering their nakedness. While they were innocent, though naked, they were not ashamed; but that jewel being gone, the irregularity of their affections began to appear in discovering themselves to be naked, by the evil operation of concupiscence in their minds.

2. They fell from their happy state into a miserable one. O what a fearful overturn was made by their sin.

(1.) Horror of conscience seizes them, ver. 8. appearing in flying from the divine presence; which nothing but guilt, clasping as a serpent about them, could have induced them to do. Death was threatened in case of transgression, Gen. ii. 17. They both died spiritually, and were bound with the cords of temporal and eternal death.

(2.) They are driven out of paradise, excommunicated and declared incapable of communion with God in the tree of life in the garden, Gen. iii. 23. 'The Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden,' as a divorced woman out of the house of her husband, as the word signifies. Nay, God drove out the man, expelling him from that pleasant and delightful place, which he had forfeited by his transgression, ver. 24.

(3.) The woman, the first transgressor, is condemned to sorrow and pain in breeding, bearing, and bringing forth children, ver. 16. which, as some observe, is greater in women than other creatures. And frequently women lose their lives in the case.

(4.) She is put under a yoke of subjection to her husband, ver. 16. Not but that the woman was subject to him before, but it was to a gentle and loving guide: but now all her desires are subjected to her husband, to grant them or deny them as he sees fit, because she ate of the forbidden fruit without asking his advice, which now, because of his and her corruption, becomes a heavy yoke.

(5.) The ground is cursed for man's sake; under the influence of which curse it is barren of wholesome fruits, which it does not yield without heavy labour and diligent cultivation, but fruitful in noxious plants, as thorns and thistles, ver. 17.

(6.) Man is condemned to singular anxiety, to weary, toilsome, and ofttimes fruitless labour, whether it be the labour of the hands or of the mind, ver. 17, 19.; for this last is to be taken into the account too, as appears from Eccl. i. 13, 18. 'I gave my heart (says the preacher), to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all

things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.'

II. Let us next consider, how or what way upright man fell. It was so that our first parents sinned, being left to the freedom of their own will. For understanding of this let us consider the following things.

1. That our first parents had a freedom of will. Freedom of will is a liberty in the will, whereby of its own accord, freely and spontaneously, without any force upon it, it chuses or refuses what is proposed to it by the understanding. And this freedom of will man hath in whatever state he be. But there is a great difference of the freedom of the will in the different states of man. In the natural corrupt state, man has a free will only to evil, Gen. vi. 5. 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.' Eph. ii. 1. 'He is dead in trespasses and sins.' He freely chuseth evil without any force on his will; and he cannot do otherwise, being under the bondage of sin. In the state of grace, man has a free-will, partly to good and partly to evil. Hence the apostle says, Rom. vii. 22, 24. 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.' In this state the will sometimes chuses that which is good, and sometimes that which is evil. This freedom of will is in all regenerate persons who have in some measure recovered the image of God. They chuse good freely by virtue of a principle of grace wrought in them by the sanctifying operations of the Divine Spirit; yet through the remainders of corruption that abides in them, their wills are sometimes inclined to that which is evil. In the state of glory, man has a free will to good only. In this state the blessed chuse good freely; and being confirmed in a holy state, they cannot sin.

The freedom of will that man had in the state of innocence was different from all these. In that state he had a freedom of will both to good and evil; and so had a power wholly to chuse good, or wholly to chuse evil: which differences it from the freedom of will in the state of grace. He had a free will to good, yea, the natural set of his will was to good only, Eccl. vii. 29. being 'made upright;' but it was liable to change through the power of temptation, and so free to evil also, as mournful experience has evidenced. Man was created holy and righteous, and received a power from God constantly to persevere in goodness, if he would? yet the act of perseverance was left to the choice and liberty of his own will. To

illustrate this a little, we may observe some resemblance of it in nature. God creates the eye, says one, and puts into it the faculty of seeing, and withal he adds to the eye necessary helps by the light of the sun. As for the act of seeing, it is left to man's liberty; for he may see if he will, and if he will he may shut his eyes. The physician, again, by his art procures an appetite, and provides convenient food for the patient: but the act of eating is in the pleasure of the patient; for he may eat, or abstain from it if he will. Thus God gave Adam strength and power to persevere in righteousness, but the will he left to himself.

Let no man quarrel, that God made Adam liable to change in his goodness; for if he had been unchangeably holy, he behoved to be so either by nature or by free grace; if by nature, that were to make him God; if of free grace, then there was no wrong done him in with-holding what was not due. And he would have got the grace of confirmation, if he had stood the time of his trial.

Secondly, God left our first parents to the freedom of their own will; and was in no respect the cause of their falling.

1. The Lord did not withdraw any of that strength and ability which he had bestowed upon them in their creation. There was no subtraction of any grace that was requisite for their standing. God is not like man to give and recal again; for his gifts are without repentance. Adam left God before he was forsaken by him.

2. The Lord did not infuse any vicious inclinations into man. There was no internal impulsion from God, exciting him to eat the forbidden fruit. He neither moved him to sin, nor approved of it, but forbade it under the severest penalty. It is altogether inconsistent with the divine purity to incline the creature to sin. As God cannot be tempted to evil, neither tempteth he any man. It is extremely injurious to his infinite wisdom to think, that he would deface and spoil that admirable work which he had composed with so much design and counsel. And it is highly dishonourable to his immense goodness. He loved his creature, the master piece of his works; and love is an inclination to do good. It was impossible therefore, that God should induce man to sin, or withdraw that power from him which was necessary to resist the temptation, when the consequence must be his inevitable ruin.

But by their being left to the freedom of their own will, we are to understand God's with-holding of that further grace (which he was nowise bound to give them) that would have infallibly prevented their falling into sin. God only permitted this fall. No doubt he could have hindered either Satan to tempt, or man to have yielded; but in his holy wise providence, without which a sparrow cannot

fall, far less all mankind, he permitted Satan to tempt, that is, he did not hinder him, which he was not obliged to do. It was in man's power to continue in his obedience or not. God was not obliged to hinder his fall. As he brings light out of darkness, order out of confusion and life out of death, so he knew how to bring good out of evil, and glory to himself out of man's fall. Adam's fall was perfectly voluntary; his own will was the sole cause of it, as will plainly appear, if you consider.

(1.) That while he continued innocent, he had a sufficient power to persevere in his holy state. God created him with a perfection of grace. If he had pleased, he might have effectually resisted the temptation and continued stedfast in his duty to God; and God was under no obligation to give him that further actual grace which would have effectually kept him up. And this grace he was bound neither to give nor continue with him.

(2.) That the devil did only allure, he could not ravish his consent. Though his malice be infinite, yet his power is restrained and limited by the omnipotent hand of Jehovah, that he cannot fasten an immediate, much less an irresistible, impression on the will. He therefore made use of an external object to invite man to sin. Now, objects have no constraining force: they are but partial agents, and derive all their efficacy from the faculty unto which they are agreeable. And although now, in our fallen state, sin hath so disordered the flesh, that there is great difficulty in resisting those objects that pleasantly insinuate themselves; yet, in the state of innocence, there was such an universal rectitude in Adam, and so entire a subjection of the sensual appetite to the superior power of reason, that he might have obtained an easy conquest. A resolute negative had made him victorious; by a strong denial, he had baffled that proud spirit.

(3.) That Adam's disobedience was the effect of his own choice. For a specious object was conveyed through the unguarded sense to his fancy, and from that to his understanding, which, by a vicious careless neglecting to consider the danger, commended it to the will, and that resolved to embrace it. Now, it is plain and undeniable, that the action which resulted from the direction of the mind, and the choice of the will, was absolutely free. Besides, as the regret that is mixed with an action is a certain character that the person is under restraint; so the delight that attends it is a clear evidence that he is free. When the appetite is drawn by the lure of pleasure, the more violent, the more voluntary is its motion. Now, the representation of the forbidden fruit was under the notion of pleasure: *The woman saw that the fruit was good for food*, (that

is, pleasurable to the palate), *pleasant to the eye, and to be desired to make one wise*, that is, to increase knowledge, which is the pleasure of the mind; and these allectives drew her into the snare. Man was under no necessity to sin. Force and co-action are inconsistent with the nature of the will, and entirely destroys it. Adam might have continued in his obedience if he had pleased. The devil had no power over him to disturb his felicity. He prevailed against him by simple suasion.

Thirdly, The devil tempted our first parents to sin. The devil in the serpent set on man while he stood. Where observe,

1. It was a true serpent which the devil appeared in. What sort of a serpent it was, is not determined: but it seems to have been a beautiful creature of a shining colour: for in Deut. viii. 15. there are serpents spoken of that are in the Hebrew called *Seraphim*, the very name given to angels, which were wont to appear in a splendid form, it may be like these seraphim; and so Eve might take the serpent for one of these good angels. But Moses' plain historical narrative leaves no room to doubt that it was a real serpent, representing it to be more subtile than any beast of the field, and as cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field, after the transgression, when it was condemned to go upon its belly, and to eat dust all the days of its life, Gen. iii. 1, 14. And it is known that the Egyptians, by the devil's instigation, worshipped serpents. And in the old Greek mysteries they used to carry about a serpent, and cry *Evah:* A sign of the extraordinary service it had done to the devil.

2. Though Moses makes no mention of the devil in this affair, yet surely he was the prime instrument in this fatal seduction. For seeing serpents cannot speak, and far less reason, we may easily conclude it was the devil, who therefore is called 'the old serpent, and a liar and murderer from the beginning,' John viii. 44. See Gen. iii. 15. Compare Heb. ii. 14. The devil then, one, perhaps the chief, of those rebellious spirits, who by a furious ambition had raised a war in heaven, and were fallen from their obedience and glorious state, designing to corrupt man, and make him a companion with them in their revolt, set about this work, urged by two strong and powerful passions, hatred and envy.

(1.) The devil was prompted to this action by an implacable hatred against God. For being fallen under a final and irrevocable doom, he looked upon God as an irreconcileable enemy; and not being able to injure his essence, he struck at his image; as the fury of some beast discharges itself at the picture of a man. He singled out Adam as the mark of his malice, that, by seducing him from his

duty, he might defeat God's design, which was to be honoured by man's free and cheerful obedience; and so to eclipse the lustre of his excellencies as though he had made man in vain.

(2.) He was solicited by envy, the first native of hell. For having lost the friendship and favour of God, and being cast out of heaven, the happy region of blessedness and joy, the sight of Adam's felicity highly exasperated and accented his grief, that man, who by the condition of his nature was inferior to him, should be prince of the world, and the special friend and favourite of heaven, whilst he himself was a miserable prisoner, under those fatal chains which restrained and tormented him, the power and the wrath of God. This made his state and condition more intolerable. His torment was incapable of any allay, but by rendering man as miserable as himself. And as hatred excited his envy, so envy inflamed his hatred, and both joined together in mischief. And being thus pushed on, his subtilty being equal to his malice, he contrives a temptation which might be most taking and dangerous to man in his raised and happy state. As soon as Adam was invested with all his glory, the devil, as it were, would dethrone him on the day of his coronation, and bring both him and all his posterity under a curse. Here I shall consider the temptation which was the occasion of man's fall, and the devil's subtilty in managing it.

1. As to the temptation itself, it was very suitable and promising. The devil attempted to seduce him by art, in his propounding the lure of knowledge and pleasure, to inveigle the spiritual and sensitive appetites at once. There were three things in which the desirableness of this fruit was represented, which sets forth the great art and sagacity of Satan.

(1.) Its agreeableness to the palate. It is said, *The woman saw the fruit that it was good for food.* Satan told her that it was of a most sweet and delicious taste, and would highly gratify her sensual appetite.

(2.) It *was pleasant to the eye;* a charming and beautiful fruit, which had an inviting aspect.

(3.) There was a desirableness in it to the rational appetite. It was *a tree to be desired to make one wise.* And the serpent told her, ver. 5. that, upon eating it, *their eyes should be opened, and they should be as gods, knowing good and evil.* He made Eve believe, that, upon her eating the fruit of that tree, she would be raised and elevated from the human to a kind of divine nature and condition. This was the temptation with which the devil assaulted our first parents in paradise, and prevailed against them.

2. I shall take notice of Satan's subtilty in managing this temp-

tation. We read of his wiles in scripture; and indeed they are worse than his darts.

(1.) That he might the better succeed in his hellish design, he addressed himself to the woman, the weakest person, and most liable to seduction. He reckoned, and that justly enough, that his attempt would be most successful here, and that she was less able to resist him. He broke over the hedge where it was weakest. He knew very well that he could more easily insinuate and wind himself into her by a temptation. An old experienced soldier, when he is to storm and enter a castle, observes carefully where there is a breach, or how he may enter with most facility: so did Satan here when he assaulted Eve, the weaker vessel. And he tempted the woman first, because he knew, if once he could prevail with her, she would easily entice and draw on her husband. Satan knew very well, that a temptation coming to Adam from Eve, his wife, in this the infancy of their married state, would be more prevailing and less suspected. Sometimes near relations prove strong temptations. A wife may be a snare, when she dissuades her husband from his duty, or entices him to sin. It is said of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 25. that 'there was none like unto him, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.' She blew the coals, and made his sin flame out with the greater violence. Satan discovered his great subtilty in tempting Adam by his wife; for he with complacency received the temptation, and, by the enticement of this old serpent, committed adultery with the creature, from whence the cursed race of sin and all miseries proceed.

(2.) He assaulted her when alone, in the absence of her husband, and so did the more easily prevail. For 'two are better than one;' and, as Solomon observes, 'a threefold cord is not easily broken.' Had Adam been present at this fatal congress, it is like the attempt had not been so easily successful.

(3.) The devil's subtilty may be seen here in hiding himself in the body of a serpent, which, before sin entered into the world was not terrible to Eve. Satan crept into a serpent, and spake in it, as the angel did afterwards in Balaam's ass. She was not afraid of this apparition; for she knew no guilt, and therefore was not subject to any fear. She might look upon this as one of the angels or blessed spirits, which, as they used after this to appear in the shape of men, why might not one of them appear now, and converse with her in the shape of a beautiful serpent; why might not she freely discourse with this, which she reckoned one of those good angels, to whose care and tuition both she and her husband were committed?

For we may suppose the fall of the angels was not yet revealed to her, and she thought this to be a good spirit, otherwise she would certainly have declined all conversation with an apostate angel. Some have supposed, and that not very improbably, that more discourse passed between the serpent and Eve than is recorded, Gen. iii. and represent the matter thus: The serpent, catching the opportunity of the woman's being at a distance from her husband, makes his address to her with a short speech, saluting her as empress of the world, and giving her a great many encomiums and dignifying titles: She wonders, and inquires what this meant? and whether he was not a brute creature? and how he came to be endowed with understanding and speech? The serpent replies, that he was nobler than a brute, and did indeed once want both these gifts; but by eating a certain fruit in this garden, he had got both. She immediately asks what fruit and tree that was which had such a surprising influence and virtue. Which when he had shewed her, she replied, This no doubt is an excellent fruit, but God hath strictly forbidden us the use of it. To which the serpent presently replies, as in the close of ver. 1. 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' The way how these words are introduced plainly shews that something had passed previous thereto. And some suppose, that the serpent, to confirm the truth of his assertion, pulled off some of the fruits of the tree, ate one in her presence, and presented another to Eve, who, before eating it, had the discourse with the serpent recorded in the subsequent verses.

(4.) The devil's subtilty appears in accosting our first parents so early, before they were confirmed in their course of obedience. The holy angels in heaven are fully confirmed in righteousness and holiness; they are called *morning stars;* Job xxxviii. 7. and are all fixed, not wandering stars. But our first parents were not confirmed in their obedience, they were not yet fixed in their orb of holiness. Though they had a possibility of standing, yet they had not an impossibility of falling. They were holy but mutable. It was possible for them to change their state. Now, Satan's subtilty was eminently manifested here.

(5.) He first allures with the hope of impunity, and then he promises an universal knowledge of good and evil.

(1.) He persuades Eve, that though she did eat of the forbidden tree, yet she should not die, ver. 4. 'Ye shall not surely die.' 'God indeed did say so for your terror, to keep you in awe. But do not entertain such hard and unworthy thoughts of that God who is infinitely good and gracious. Do not think that, for such a trifle as the eating of a little fruit, he will undo you and all your posterity

for ever, and so suddenly destroy the most excellent piece of his own workmanship, wherein his image shines in a most resplendent manner.'

(2.) He promiseth them an universal knowledge, as the effect of eating this fruit, ver. 5. 'For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' 'God's design in that prohibition is only this: He knows that you shall be so far from dying, that thereby you shall certainly be entered into a new and more noble and excellent kind of life. The eyes of your understanding, which are now shut in a great measure as to the knowledge of many things, shall then be wide opened, and ye shall see more clearly and distinctly than now you do. You shall be as God, and shall attain to a kind of omniscience.'

(6.) Satan's subtilty was manifested here, in assaulting Eve's faith. He would persuade her, that God had not spoken truth in that threatening. He managed the whole business with a lie; yea, he adds one lie to another. 'Ye shall not surely die,' says he; and then he represents God as envying our first parents that great honour and happiness that was attainable by them, ver. 5. and himself as one that wished their happiness, and would tell her how to arrive at it; and alleges they might easily understand, by the very name of the tree, the truth of what he says to her. 'It is (says he) because God envies your felicity that he hath forbidden you the use of this tree. But know ye, if ye eat of it, ye shall be as gods.' Here was subtilty indeed. The devil was first a liar, and then a murderer. This was Satan's master-piece to weaken her faith; for when he had shaken that, and brought her once to distrust, then she was easily overcome: and presently put forth her hand to pluck the forbidden fruit. By these pretences he ruined innocence itself: for the woman being deceived by these allectives, swallowed down the poison of the serpent; and having tasted death herself, she betook herself to her husband, and persuaded him by the same means to despise the law of their Creator.

Thus sin made its entrance into the world, and brought an universal confusion into it. For the moral harmony of the world consisting in the just subordination of the several ranks of beings to one another, and of all to God, when man, who was placed next to him, broke the union, his fall brought a desperate disorder into God's government. And though the matter of the offence may seem small, yet the disobedience was infinitely great; it being the transgression of that command which was given to be the real proof of man's subjection to God. The honour and majesty of the whole law

was violated in the breach of that symbolical precept. But this will fall to be more fully illustrated in a subsequent discourse.

Fourthly, Man being thus left to the freedom of his own will, abused his liberty in complying with the temptation, and freely apostatised from God. And so man himself, and he only, was the true and proper cause of his own sinning. Not God, for he is unchangeably holy; not the devil, for he could only tempt, not force: therefore man himself only is to blame, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.'

I shall conclude this subject with a few inferences.

1. Hence see the great weakness, yea the nothingness of the creature when left to itself. When Adam was in the state of integrity, he quickly made a defection from God, he soon lost the robe of his primitive innocence, and all the blessedness of paradise. If our nature was so weak when at the best, then how miserably weak is it now when it is at its worst? If Adam did not stand when he was perfectly holy and righteous, how unable are we to stand when sin has entirely disabled us? If purified nature could not resist the temptation, but was quite overturned at the first blast, how shall corrupt nature stand, when besieged and stormed with a long succession of strong and violent assaults? If Adam in a few hours sinned himself out of paradise, O how quickly would even those who are regenerated sin themselves into hell, if they were not preserved by a greater power than their own; nay 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation?' God left some of the angels to themselves, and they turned devils; and he left innocent Adam, and he fell into a gulf of misery. May we not then much more say, 'Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall;' especially seeing we have a violent bent and strong propensity of heart and will to go away from God, which Adam had not.

2. There is no reason to blame God for the misery of the fall. He gave man sufficient power and ability to stand if he would, promised a large reward to excite his obedience, and severely threatened disobedience: but man would needs try experiments to make his case better than God made it; and so fell by his own inventions. The fault then was his own, he alone was culpable, and he was the author of his own ruin.

3. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. You see that you have to do with an impudent devil, who is still going about seeking whom he may devour. No state, while ye are in this world, can secure you from his temptations. Though ye be in a state of reconciliation and friendship with God, ye are not secure from his assaults. No place, though it were a paradise, can protect you. He

has malice enough to push you on to the most atrocious sins; subtilty and experience, acquired by hellish art in the course of some thousand years, to suit his baits so as they may best take with you. Do not parley with the tempter: listening to him may bring on doubting, and doubting may bring on the denial of God's truths, and so end in full compliance with his horrid temptations, as it did with our first mother.

4. If Adam fell so soon after he was created, and could not be his own keeper, then certainly he can much less be his own saviour. If he could not preserve himself from falling into the gulf, much less can he pull himself out of it again. We are by nature without strength, and have no inclination to that which is good; and therefore God must work powerfully and efficaciously in us. We cannot break the chains and knock off the fetters of sin and Satan, by which we are held. We can make no reparation to the honour of God for the wrongs and indignities we have done him. To Christ alone we must be indebted for all this. We have destroyed ourselves, but in him is our help.

5. There is no justification by the works of the law. Adam broke the covenant of works, and so rendered it impracticable for him or his posterity to attain to life and happiness by it. For it is written, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. iii. 10. 'As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.' The law requires a perfect spotless righteousness, but the best righteousness of fallen man is but filthy rags. It is not only torn and ragged, but polluted and defiled. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God: and there is no possibility of obtaining justification by the works of the law now; 'for by the works of the law (says Paul) shall no flesh be justified.'

6. *Lastly*, See your absolute need of Christ; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby ye can be saved. Go not about to establish a righteousness of your own, or to seek to get to heaven by any works of your own. That is indeed still the thing man aims at. First he sins, and then, like Adam, sets to work to cover himself with a cover of his own making, to procure a title to eternal life by his own works. But is it easier to recover yourselves from the ruins of the fall, than to stand while yet in an innocent and upright state? Have ye gathered strength by sinning, and are ye able to walk to heaven on your own legs? Come then to Christ, who by his obedience and death hath procured a righteousness which alone can stand you in stead, and by which alone you can obtain a right to eternal life. You must then either come to Christ, or perish for ever.

OF SIN IN GENERAL.

1 JOHN III. 4.—*Sin is the transgression of the law.*

IN these words we have an answer to that question, 'What is sin?' It is a *transgression of the law:* for 'where no law is, there is no transgression,' Rom. iv. 15. But because the word *transgression* seems to import something positive and actual, therefore it is added in the Catechism, it is a 'want of conformity unto the law,' which is a more general definition: and this meaning the word in the original most properly bears. Hence both a want of conformity unto the law of God, and a transgression of it, are taken into the description; and in effect they are both one thing.

In the further illustration of this subject, it will be proper to shew,

I. What that law is whereof sin is the trangression.

II. Wherein the nature of sin consists.

III. Wherein the evil thereof lies.

IV. Deduce a few inferences.

I. I am to shew what is that law whereof sin is the transgression. It is the law of God, even any law of his whereby he lays any duty upon any of the children of men, whether it be the natural law which is written even in the hearts of all men, Rom. ii. 15. or the revealed law and will of God, written in the Bible, whether it be the law strictly so called, or the gospel, whose great command is to believe in Christ; the transgression of which command is the great sin of the hearers of the gospel. In a word, the law of which sin is the transgression, is any law or command of God which he obliges us to obey. More particularly,

1. There is a law engraven upon the hearts of men by nature, which was in force long before the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai. This is the light of reason, and the dictates of natural conscience concerning those moral principles of good and evil, which have an essential equity in them, and shew man his duty to God, to his neighbour, and to himself. There is a law in all men by nature, which is a rule of good and evil. They have notions of right and wrong in their consciences; which is evident by those laws which are common in all nations for the preservation of human society, the encouraging of virtue, and discouraging of vice. These laws are to be found among men who have not the benefit of divine revelation for regulating their lives. Now, what standard else can they have for these but common reason, and the light of nature?

Every son and daughter of Adam brings with them into the world a law in their breast; and when reason clears up itself from the clouds of sense, they can distinguish between good and evil, between things which ought to be done, and things which they should avoid. Every man finds a law in his heart that checks and rebukes when he offends, and cherishes and encourages him when he does good. None are without a legal indictment and a legal execution within themselves, Rom. ii. 14, 15.

2. There is another law which was given to the Jewish nation by the ministry of Moses. This is spoken of by Christ, John xvii. 19. 'Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? By this we are to understand the whole system of divine precepts concerning ceremonial rites, judicial processes, and moral duties. Accordingly there was a threefold law given by Moses.

(1.) The ceremonial law, which was a certain system of divine positive precepts, with relation to the external worship of God. It was wholly taken up in enjoining those observances of sacrifices and offerings, and various methods of purifications and cleansings which were typical of Christ, and of that sacrifice of his which alone was able to take away sin.

(2.) The judicial law consisted of those institutions which God prescribed the Jews for their civil government. For, whereas, in other commonwealths, the chief magistrates give laws unto the people; in this the laws for their religion and for their civil government were both divine, and both immediately from God. So that the judicial law was given them to be the standing law of their nation, according to which all actions and suits between party and party were to be tried and determined; as in all other nations there are particular laws and statutes for the decision of controversies that may arise among men.

3. There is the moral law which is a system or body of those precepts which carry an universal and natural equity in them, being so conformable to the light of reason, and the dictates of every man's conscience, that as soon as ever they are declared and understood, we must needs subscribe to the justice and righteousness of them. We have the sum of this law in the ten commandments. This law continues in its full force and power, obliging the conscience as a standing rule for our obedience. Our Lord tells us, Matt. v. 17. that 'he came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them.' The ceremonial law was abolished by the death of Christ, and the judicial law, so far as it concerned the nation of the Jews as a commonwealth and body politic, particularly touching their not marrying out of their own tribes, their not alienating the inheri-

tance of their fathers, the raising up of seed to their deceased brother, &c., but such of these political laws as are common to men in general, and founded upon the law of nature, are still binding and in force, such as the laws for punishing criminals and other offenders, the laws against oppressing of widows, orphans, strangers, the fatherless, &c. These are a standing rule of equity and justice; they are of a moral nature, and therefore of perpetual obligation. So that the law of which sin is the transgression, is to us the law of nature in our hearts, and the moral law contained in the scriptures, and summed up in the decalogue, as well as the positive laws of the gospel of Christ.

II. I proceed to shew wherein the nature of sin consists. It consists in a want of conformity to the law of God, or a disconformity thereto. The law of God is the rule; whatsoever is over this rule, is sin. The law of God is set as a mark to us; and so the word *sin*, in the first language properly signifies a not hitting the mark; and *transgression* is a swerving from the right line, or a going off the way. So it is called 'a going aside,' Psal. xiv. 3. Now, nothing is conformable to the law which is not perfectly so; for if it be in the least disagreeable thereto, it is not conformable to it, more than that which wants half an inch of an ell is truly an ell of measure; and therefore any want of that conformity is sin. The law of God requires universal conformity to it. Now the law or command of God requires a twofold conformity.

1. A conformity of the heart to it. It reaches the inward man, seeing God is a spirit, and that omniscient One who knows the heart; and the whole heart must be subject to him. Therefore our Saviour says, Mark xii. 30. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.'

2. A conformity of the life both in words and deeds. Hence says David, Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.' And forasmuch as the law requires some things, and forbids other things both in heart and life, the want of conformity to it in these respects, either in heart or life, is sin. Hence we may infer,

1. Sin is no positive being, but a want of due perfection, a defect, an imperfection in the creature; and therefore it is, (1.) Not from God, but from the creature itself. (2.) It is not a thing to glory in, more than the want of all things. (3.) It is a thing we have reason to be humbled for, and have great need to have removed. (4.) It is

not a thing to be desired, but fled from and abhorred, as the abominable thing which God hateth.

2. Original sin is truly and properly sin. Look to yourselves as you came into the world, and ye must smite on your breast, before ye have sucked the breasts, and say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' For we come into it with Adam's sin imputed, Rom. v. 12. stript of original righteousness, and the whole nature corrupted. This is the sin of our nature, being a want of conformity in our souls to the law of God, which requires all moral perfection of us, Matth. v. ult. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Instead of which we have a bent of soul quite contrary to the law, Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.'

3. The first motions of sin, and the risings of that natural corruption in us, before it be completed with the consent of the will to the evil motion, are truly and properly sin. The apostle calls this *lust*, and distinguishes it from sin, *i. e.* the sin of our nature, and from the consent to it and execution of it, which he calls 'obeying these lusts,' Rom. vi. 12. and tells us that it is condemned by the law, Rom. vii. 7. Therefore a thing may be our sin, though we know it not to be so, 1 Tim. i. 13. and though it be not our will, yea though against our will, Rom. vii. 16. For it is neither our knowledge, or opinion, nor our will, but the law of God, that is the rule.

4. All consent of the heart to and delight in motions towards things forbidden by the law of God are sins, though these never break forth into action, but die where they were born in the inmost corners of our hearts, Matth. v. 28. 'Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Speculative filthiness is a disconformity to the law. There is heart murder as well as actual murder, ver. 22.

5. All omissions of the internal duties we owe to God and our neighbours are sins, as want of love to God or our neighbours. Want of due fear of God, trust and hope in him, &c. are internal sins of omission.

6. Hence a man sins by undue silence and undue speaking, when the cause of God and truth require it; seeing the law bids us speak in some cases, but never speak what is not good.

7. Hence also a man's sins, when he omits outward duties that are incumbent on him to perform, as well as when he commits sin of whatever kind in his life.

8. *Lastly*, The least failure in any duty is sin; and whatever comes not up in perfection to the law is sinful. And therefore we

sin in every thing we do, and our best duties deserve damnation, and cannot be accepted according to the law. Wherefore the duties of wicked men are absolutely rejected, seeing they are under the law; and the duties of the godly are no otherwise accepted, but as washed in the blood of Christ, which takes away the sin cleaving to them.

Further, nothing can be a sin but what is a transgressing of the law of God, who only is Lord over the conscience. Therefore, if there be no law of God in the case, there is no transgression affecting the conscience. But it must be considered, that the law of God commands some things expressly, and others things by good consequence. No law of God commands a servant expressly to do such and such a particular piece of work that is lawful, which he is bidden do by his master; but the law of God says, 'Servants, obey your masters;' and therefore it is sin if he do not that work. The case is the same as to men's laws. Therefore the apostle says, Rom. xiii. 5. 'Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.' Now, men's laws are either contrary to God's laws, or agreeable and subservient thereto, as being for the glory of God, or the good of the nation in general. As to the first of these, ye cannot obey without sin, as if the Queen and Parliament should command you to receive human ceremonies in the worship of God. As to other things that are good and just, we are obliged to obey, as is clear from Rom. xiii.; and therefore the conscience is not altogether unconcerned in the laws of men. And therefore, if ye would be tender Christians, before ye go against the laws of the land, consider well whether their commands be unlawful, or whether they be such as are good and just; for doubtless magistrates have a power to make laws for the good of the land in general; and what they so make we are obliged to respect, otherwise we contemn the ordinance of God, and regard not the good of our neighbour, and thereby sin against God; as is acknowledged in the case of those that now export grain, to the general distress of the country. And I apprehend, that if we would lay the case home to ourselves, we would have less liberty than we have in some things that are not scrupled at.

III. I come now to shew wherein the evil of sin lies. It lies,

1. And principally, in the wrong done to God, and its contrariety, (1.) To his nature, which is altogether holy. Hence the Psalmist says, Psal. li. 4. 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.' David had exceedingly wronged Uriah in defiling his wife, and procuring the death of himself; yet he considers his great sin in that matter as chiefly against God, and

contrary to his holy nature. (2.) In its contrariety to God's will and law, which is a sort of a copy of his nature. And God being all good, and the chief good, sin must needs be a sort of infinite evil.

2. In the wrong it doth to ourselves: 'He that sinneth against me,' says the personal Wisdom of God, 'wrongeth his own soul,' Prov. viii. 36. For, (1.) It leaves a stain and spiritual pollution on the soul, whereby it becomes filthy and vile; and therefore sin is called filthiness, and is said to defile the soul, whereupon follows God's loathing the sinner, Isa. i. 15. and shame and confusion on the sinner himself, Gen. iii. 7. (2.) It brings on guilt, whereby the sinner is bound over to punishment, according to the state in which he is, until his sin be pardoned. This ariseth from the justice of God and the threatening of his law; which brings on all miseries whatsoever.

But more particularly upon this head, when men pass the bounds and limits which God hath set them in his law, then they transgress it. All the violations of negative precepts are transgressions of God's law. The design of the moral law is to keep men within the bounds of their duty; and when they sin they go beyond them. Sin is indeed the greatest of evils; it is directly opposite to God the supreme good. The definition that is given of sin expresses its essential evil. It is the transgression of the divine law, and consequently it opposes the rights of God's throne, and obscures the glory of his attributes, which are exercised in the moral government of the world. God is our King, our Lawgiver, and our Judge. From his right and propriety in us as his creatures, his title to and sovereign power and dominion over us doth arise and flow. Man is endued with the powers of understanding and election, to conceive and choose what is good, and to reject what is evil; is governed by a law, even the declared will of his Maker. Now, sin, being a transgression of this law, contains many evils in it. As,

1. It is high rebellion against the sovereign Majesty of God, that gives the life of authority to the law. Therefore divine precepts are enforced with the most proper and binding motive to obedience. *I am the Lord.* He that commits sin, especially with pleasure and design, implicitly denies his dependence upon God as his Maker and Governor, and arrogates to himself an irresponsible liberty to do his own will. This is clearly expressed by those atheistical designers, who said, 'Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us? Psal. xii. 4. The language of men's actions, which is more convincing than their words, plainly declares, that they despise his commandments, and contemn his authority, as if they were not his creatures and subjects.

2. It is an extreme aggravation of this evil, that sin, as it is a disclaiming our homage to God, so it is in true account a yielding subjection to the devil; for sin is in the strictest propriety his work. The original rebellion in paradise was by his temptation; and all the actual and habitual sins of men, since the fall, are by his efficacious influence. He darkens the carnal mind; he sways and rules the stubborn will; he excites and inflames the vitious affections, and imperiously rules in the children of disobedience. He is therefore styled the prince and god of this world. And what more contumelious indignity can there be, than to prefer to the glorious Creator of heaven and earth, a damned spirit, the most cursed part of the whole creation? More particularly, sin strikes at the root of all the divine attributes.

(1.) It is contrary to the unspotted holiness of God, which is the peculiar glory of the Deity. Of all the glorious and benign constellations of the divine attributes which shine in the law of God, his holiness hath the brightest lustre. God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: but the most precious and venerable monument of his holiness is the law. This is a true draught of his image, and a clear copy of his nature and will. It is the perspicuous rule of our duty, without any blemish or imperfection. See what a high encomium the apostle gives it, 'The commandment is holy, just, and good,' Rom. vii. 12. It enjoins nothing but what is absolutely good, without the least mixture and tincture of evil. It is a full and complete rule, in nothing defective, and in nothing superfluous, but comprehends the whole duty of man. The sum of it is set down by the apostle, Tit. ii. 11. We are *to live soberly, i. e.* we are to abstain from every thing that may blemish and stain the excellency of our reasonable nature. We are to live *righteously.* This respects the state and situation wherein God hath placed us in the world for the advancing of his glory. It includes and comprehends in it all the respective duties we owe to others, to whom we are united by the bands of nature, of civil society, or of spiritual communion. And we are to live *godly*, which takes in all the internal and outward duties which we owe to God, who is the Sovereign of our spirits, whose will must be the rule, and his glory the end of all our actions. In short the law is so contrived and framed, that abstracting from the authority of the Lawgiver, its holiness and goodness lays an eternal obligation upon us to obey its dictates. Now, sin is directly and formally a contrariety to the infinite sanctity and purity of God; consisting in a not doing what the law commands, or in doing that which it expressly forbids; and God cannot look upon it, but with infinite detestation, Hab. i. 13. He

cannot but hate that which is opposite to the glory of his nature, and to the lustre of all his perfections.

(2.) Sin vilifies the wisdom of God, which prescribed the law to men as the rule of their duty. The divine wisdom shines resplendently in his laws. They are all framed with an exact congruity to the nature of God, and his relation to us, and to the faculties of man before he was corrupted. And thus the divine law being a bright transcript both of God's will and his wisdom, binds the understanding and will, which are the leading faculties in man, to esteem and approve, to consent to and choose, all his precepts as best. Now, sin vilifies the infinite wisdom of God, both as to the precepts of the law, the rule of our duty, and the sanction annexed to it for confirming its obligation. It taxes the precepts as an unequal yoke, and as too severe and rigid a confinement to our wills and actions. Thus the impious rebels complained of old, 'The ways of the Lord are not equal:' they are injurious to our liberties, they restrain and infringe them, and are not worthy of our study and observation. And it accounts the rewards and punishments which God has annexed as the sanction of the law to secure our obedience to its precepts, weak and ineffectual motives to serve that purpose. And thus it reflects upon the wisdom of the Lawgiver as lame and defective, in not binding his subjects more firmly to their duty.

(3.) Sin is a high contempt and horrid abuse of the divine goodness, which should have a powerful influence in binding man to his duty. His creating goodness is hereby contemned, which raised us out of the dust of the earth unto an excellent and glorious being. Our parents were indeed instrumental in the production of our bodies; but the variety and union, the beauty and usefulness, of the several parts, was the high design of his wisdom, and the excellent work of his hands. Man's body is composed of as many miracles as members, and is full of wonders. The lively idea and perfect exemplar of that regular fabric was modelled in the divine mind. This affected David with holy admiration, Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15, 16. The soul, or principal part, is of a celestial original, inspired by the Father of Lights. The faculties of understanding and election are the indelible characters of our honour and dignity above the brutes, and make us capable to please God and enjoy our Maker. Now, God's design in giving us our being was to communicate of his own fulness to, and to be actively glorified by intelligent creatures, Rev. iv. 11. None are so void of rational sentiments, as not to own, that it is our indispensable duty and reasonable service to offer up ourselves an entire living sacrifice to the glory of God. What is more natural, according to the laws of uncorrupted reason, than that love should

correspond with love? As the one descends in benefits, the other should ascend in praise and thankfulness. Now, sin breaks all these sacred bonds of grace and gratitude, which engage us to love and obey our Maker. He is the just Lord of all our faculties, intellectual and sensitive; and the sinner employs them all as weapons of unrighteousness to fight against God. Again, it is he that upholds and preserves us by the powerful influence of his providence, which is a renewed creation every moment, daily surrounding us with many mercies. All the goodness which God thus bestows upon men, the sinner abuses against him. This is the most unworthy, shameful, and monstrous ingratitude imaginable. This makes forgetful and unthankful men more brutish than the dull ox or stupid ass, who serve and obey those that feed and keep them. Yea it sinks them below the insensible part of the creation, which invariably observes the law and order prescribed by the Creator. This is astonishing degeneracy. It was the complaint of God himself, Isa. i. 2. 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.'

(4.) The sinner disparages the divine justice, in promising himself peace and safety, notwithstanding the wrath and vengeance that is denounced against him by the Lord. He labours to dissolve the inseparable connexion that God hath placed between sin and punishment, which is not a mere arbitrary constitution, but founded upon the desert of sin, and the infinite rectitude of the divine nature, which unchangeably hates it. The sinner sets the divine attributes a contending as it were with one another, presuming that mercy will disarm justice, and suspend its power by restraining it from taking vengeance upon impenitent sinners. And thus sinners become bold and resolute in their impious courses, like him mentioned, Deut. xxix. 19. who said, 'I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.' This casts such an aspersion on the justice of God, that he solemnly threatens the severest vengeance for it; as you may see in ver. 20. 'The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.'

(5.) Sin strikes against the omniscience of God, and at least denies it implicitly. There is such a turpitude adhering to sin, that it cannot endure the light of the sun, nor the light of conscience, but seeks to be concealed under a mask of virtue or a veil of darkness. What is said of the adulterer and the thief, is true in proportion of every sinner, 'If a man sees them, they are in the terrors

of the shadow of death.' And hence it is, that many who would blush and tremble if they were surprised in their sinful actings by a child or a stranger, are not at all afraid of the eye of God, though he narrowly notices all their sins in order to judge them, and will judge them in order to punish them.

(6.) *Lastly*, Sin bids a defiance to the divine power. This is one of the essential attributes of God that makes him so terrible to devils and wicked men. He hath both a right to punish and power enough to revenge every transgression of his law that sinners are guilty of. Now, his judicial power is supreme and his executive power is irresistible. He can with one stroke dispatch the body to the grave, and the soul to the pit of hell, and make men as miserable as they are sinful: and yet sinners as boldly provoke him as if there were no danger. We read of the infatuated Syrians, how they foolishly thought that God the protector of Israel had only power on the hills but not in the valleys, and therefore renewed the war to their own destruction. Thus proud sinners enter the lists with God, and range an army of lusts against the armies of heaven, and, being blindly bold, run on headlong upon their own ruin. They neither believe God's all-seeing eye, nor fear his almighty hand. You see then what an evil sin is in its nature. It is high rebellion against God, and strikes at the root of all his attributes.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. If ye would see your sins, look to the law of God. That is the glass wherein we may see our ugly face. Hence the apostle says, Rom. vii. 7. 'I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.' Look to it for what is past and present, in order to your being humbled in the sight of a holy God. Look to it for your direction, if you would shun the fatal rocks of sin for the time to come. It is not what this man says, but what the word of God says, that is to be the rule of your duty.

2. See here what presumption it is in men to make that duty which God has not made so, and that sin which God has not made so in religion. This is for men to set themselves in God's room, and their will for the divine will. This is true superstition, however far the guilty seem to themselves and others to be from it. And in this too many of different denominations agree, making that duty and sin which God never made so. In this general they agree, however they differ in particulars. This is expressly forbidden, Deut. iv. 2. 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.' Remarkable is the reason of this prohibition, 'that ye may keep the command-

ments of the Lord your God which I command you.' For to both agrees what our Lord said, Matt. xv. 3. 'Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?' Witness the deep ignorance of matters of salvation and the power of godliness, wherein many are kept by reason of these principles, which have no footing in the word of God.

3. Flee to Jesus Christ for the pardon of sin, for his blood and Spirit to remove the same. All the waters of the sea will not wash it out, but that blood alone. And repent and forsake your sin, or it will be your ruin. Consider it is the greatest evil. For,

(1.) It is most contrary to the nature of God, who is the greatest good; and that which is most contrary to the greatest good, must needs be the greatest evil. It may be looked on as the nadir to zenith. The devil is not so contrary to God: for God gave the devil a being, but not sin. It is sin that makes the devil opposite to God; it is the master, he the scholar. The fire is hotter than the water which it heats. Sin fights against God; it is a deicide; and, as one says, the sinner so far as in him lies, destroys the nature of God. Sin is a dethroning of God, yea it strikes at his being. It musters up its forces in the open field against God, and when it is beaten from thence, it has its strong holds to go to; yea, like the thief on the cross, when it is crucified, it spits its venom against him. It is a walking contrary to him; and it rises against him even to the last gasp.

(2.) Sin is the mother of all evils that ever were or shall be. It is the big-bellied monster that is delivered daily of all other evils as its births. It is that which has brought forth all the fire-brands that ever were. What cast the angels out of heaven, or Adam out of paradise? Sin draws the sword against nations, makes women husbandless, mothers childless, and brings on wars, famine and pestilence. Personal evils, whether on soul or body, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are all from sin. It must needs then be the greatest evil.

(3.) Sin is the concluding stroke of wrath on the soul. It is that to which people are entirely given up. And what is it that makes hell in the world, that God gives as the last stroke after all the rest? Why, it is to give up the soul to sin; Ezek. xxiv. 13. 'Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee,' That is the doom, 'Let him that is filthy be filthy still.' He that was delivered up to Satan, was restored again: but we never hear of any being restored who were given up to themselves. Better be given up to the devil than to sin.

OF THE FIRST SIN IN PARTICULAR.

GEN. iii. 6, 7.—*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

IN these words we are distinctly informed how the covenant of works was broken, and our first parents stripped of their primitive innocence and integrity. Eve seduced by the devil, first ate of the forbidden fruit, and Adam followed her example. The act being completed by both, they immediately discovered, to their shame and dishonour, the miserable state they were reduced to.

The words sufficiently found the following doctrine.

DOCT. 'Our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, by eating the forbidden fruit.'

I have already shewn why the forbidden tree was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as also of what use it was in the covenant of works. It remains that we shew,

I. How the eating of the forbidden fruit was the first sin of our first parents, by which they fell.

II. Why this fruit was forbidden.

III. The aggravations of it.

IV. Deduce some inferences.

I. I am to shew how the eating of the forbidden fruit was the first sin of our first parents, by which they fell. It is not to be thought, that they were wholly innocent till they had the forbidden fruit in their mouths; for their coveting it in their hearts behoved of necessity to go before that; but the eating of it was that whereby their sin and apostacy from their Creator was completed. The first step of their sin seems then to be doubting and unbelief of the threatening, Gen. iii. 4, 6. Their faith as to the truth of the threatening being first foundered, their heart plied to the temptation; and then succeeded a lust after the forbidden fruit; and then the sin was completed by their actually eating it, as in the words of the text.

Satan, the old serpent, very artfully laid his train for enticing our first parents to eat this forbidden fruit. For he attacked the woman when alone, at a distance from her husband; he endeavoured to make her doubt of the truth of the divine threatening;

he presented the fatal object, as fruit pleasant to the eye, and to be desired to make one wise: he pretended a higher regard for them than their sovereign Creator, who, he tacitly insinuated, grudged their happiness: and he used means to persuade them, that they should be like God, in the vast extent of their knowledge, upon their eating the delectable morsel. Thus the eyes of their mind were first blemished by a mist from hell; which being admitted, gradually darkened their understanding, so that first doubting, and then disbelief of the threatening, ensued. Their will was easily conquered to a compliance with the temptation; then a corrupt affection to the tree seized them, discovering itself in a lustful looking at it: then the hand took it, and the mouth ate it, and the fatal morsel was swallowed.

II. I am next to shew why this fruit was forbidden.

1. It was not because God grudged the happiness of our first parents, as the devil blasphemously alleged, whom the event proved a liar, John viii. 44. Nor yet,

2. Because there was any evil in the fruit itself; for that could not be; for we are told, Gen. i. ult. that, at the close of the creation *every thing was very good.* This fruit was not forbidden because it was evil, but it was evil because it was forbidden. It was forbidden for the trial of man's obedience. Not that God knew not what was in man, and what he would be, but to discover the creature's weakness to himself without God, and that he might thence take occasion of advancing his own glory impaired by the sin of man, in a more illustrious manner than if innocent Adam had continued in his primitive state. But it may be asked, Why did God make choice of this for the trial of man? I answer, God did so most reasonably. For,

(1.) This being a thing in itself indifferent, was most meet for the trial of his obedience. For hereby his obedience was to turn upon the precise point of the will of God, which would have been the plainest evidence of obedience. Had it been to love God or his neighbour, nature itself taught him to do so, and by the natural make of his soul he was inclined to this. What trial would that have been to a man newly created, and loaded with benefits from God, not to take another God, worship images, or take his name in vain, when he saw all to be God's creatures or servants; to keep the sabbath, which was to return once a-week only? He had no father or mother to honour, none to kill but her that was his own flesh, none to commit adultery with, none to steal from, none to bear false witness against, none to covet their goods. Thus the prohibition of a thing in itself indifferent was a proper test, and the only proper test for the trial of man.

(2.) Thus man's obedience or disobedience would be most clear and conspicuous, being in an external thing whereof his very senses might be judge; which could not be in the internal acts of obedience.

(3.) This was most proper for asserting the sovereign dominion of God, who had set him down in a beautiful paradise, and made him lord of the world. Was it not very reasonable that God should keep one single tree from him, as a testimony of his holding God as his great Landlord?

(4.) This was most useful and necessary to man, as a memorandum of the state wherein he was created. For man was created with a free will to good, whereof the tree of life was an evidence: but also to evil, whereof the tree of knowledge of good and evil was an evidence. So that in effect it was a continual watchword to him, and a beacon set up before him to beware of dashing on the rock of sin.

(5.) It was a great mercy to man, in that, beside the natural make of his soul, which was turned towards God as his chief happiness and end, he had this prohibition set to keep it in that posture. For as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hand, Exod. xvii. 12, so man had the fabric of his body looking upward, and this fair tree forbidden him, to teach him that his happiness lay not in the creatures, but in God. So that this tree being forbidden was a sign of emptiness hung before the creature's door, with that inscription, Here is not your rest; the creature's hand pointing man away from themselves to God, as the alone fountain of happiness.

(6.) *Lastly*, This was a compend of the whole law of God, wherein all was summarily comprehended, viz. love to God, and his neighbour, as will afterwards be made appear.

III. I come now to consider the evil of this first sin. Some may be ready to say, Was not the eating of the forbidden fruit a little sin? So it appears indeed in the sight of blind man, whose eye being put out with it, sees not the great majesty of God, and the horrid evil of the action. But indeed it was more horrible if ye consider,

1. The aggravations of it.
2. The nature of it.
3. The effects of it.

First, Let us view the aggravations of this first sin. Consider,

1. The person who did it. I may say it was not a sinner that sinned, but an innocent person, free from all inclination to evil; one whom God made able to stand if he would, and endued with the image of God, without any mixture of sinful ignorance, perverseness of will, or irregularity of affections. No wonder to see a man with

a poor stock soon broken: but that a man who had such a large stock should play the bankrupt, was horrid indeed.

2. What was the thing for which he broke the command. Achan had a wedge of gold to tempt him, and Judas thirty pieces of silver to entice his covetous disposition. But what was the enticing object in Adam's case? The fruit of a tree: a small thing indeed: but the smaller the thing was, the more inexcusable the sinner, whom Satan could draw after him by so slender a thread. What need had he of that, when God had given him abundance of other fruit? But, with David, Adam spares his own flock, and takes his neighbour's one lamb.

3. The persons wronged by this sin. He sinned against God himself, to whom he owed the strictest obedience; against his soul and body, upon which he brought wrath and a curse; against all his posterity, who were then in his loins, upon whom his sin has entailed a scene of evils, under which the human race will groan to the end of time. Never did one sin strike against so many at once.

4. The time of this transgression. Man was scarcely well come out of the hand of his Creator, till he lifted up his heel against him. He stood very short while, till he turned giddy with ambition, and fell into disgrace. It is thought probable, he fell the same day he was created; and such an early revolt from his allegiance was a very high aggravation of his sin.

5. The place where the crime was committed. In paradise, where every plant and flower were proclaiming the glory of God, and where he wanted nothing that was necessary for him. In the presence-chamber, as it were, he struck at his Sovereign Lord and King. So his offence was aggravated like the murder of Zacharias, whom the Jews slew between the temple and the altar, Matt. xxiii. 35.

Secondly, The nature of this sin. It was not one single sin, but a complication of all evils, a violation of the whole law of God, and a total apostacy from him in heart, lip, and life.* This was a sin whereby at one touch both the natural and positive law was trampled under foot; yea, by which all the ten commandments were struck at, at once.

1. Did they not chuse new gods: when, by eating this fruit, they made their belly their god; self their god; nay the devil their god, when they conspired with him against God, being filled with pride and ambition as he to be like God; when they believed the

* A more particular view of the ingredients in the first sin may be seen in the author's *View of the Covenant of Works*, p. 80, 81. published in 1772.

devil and mistrusted God, and shook off the yoke of his dominion, turning rebels to him, and being most unthankful for the divine goodness expressed towards them? Rebel-man set up a trinity, (1.) Of his belly, for sensuality, (2.) Of himself, by ambition; and, (3.) Of the devil, by believing him, and disbelieving his Creator.

2. Though man at first received, yet he did not observe that great ordinance of God about the forbidden fruit. He contemned that ordinance which God had most plainly appointed, and would needs carve out to himself how he would serve the Lord.

He took the name of the Lord his God in vain, despising his attributes, whereby he makes himself known, his justice, truth, power, &c. profaning God's ordinance, that sacramental tree; abusing his word, by not giving credit to it; and abusing his works, that creature which he should not have touched; and violently misconstructing the work of providence, as if God, by that act of forbidding them that tree, had minded to keep them from happiness. And therefore though there was no man to punish them, God suffered them not to escape his righteous judgment.

4. He was so far from remembering the Sabbath to keep it holy, that he put himself out of all case for serving God ere it came, by this means. He kept not that state of rest wherein God had placed him.

5. Adam honoured not his Father in heaven. Both our first parents minded not their relative duties. Eve forgets herself, and acts without advice of her husband, to the ruin of both; and Adam, instead of admonishing her to repent, yields to the temptation too, and so confirms her in her wickedness. They forgot all duty to their posterity. Therefore their days were not long in the land which the Lord their God gave them.

6. He was the greatest murderer that ever lived. By this act he was a child-murderer, cutting the throats of all his posterity; and he was a self-murderer too.

7. Our first parents were fain to cover their nakedness with fig-leaves, which their luxury and sensuality had brought them too.

8. Adam committed theft; and was but a thief and a robber in taking that which was not his own, against the will of the great Owner. He was the Achan in the camp.

9. He bare false witness against the Lord, when he ate of the forbidden fruit. It was an avouching, that God's word was not to be believed, that the Lord dealt hardly and scrimptly with him, and grudged his happiness.

10. He was discontented with that happy state wherein God had placed him. He was not content with his lot, and therefore, like

another king of Babylon, he coveted an evil covetousness to his house; which ruined both himself and them.

Thirdly, Consider the effects of this first sin.

1. God was robbed of his glory, that he should have had from the creature's active obedience. He was made and well qualified for glorifying his Creator; but breaking covenant with God, and falling under the curse of the law, he was quite indisposed for that work. He could aim no more at this mark which God set before him.

2. God's image was defaced; the King of Heaven's picture was rent in pieces. What a huge offence would it be to come into a workman's shop, and with one touch dash in pieces a curious piece of work that he had made? Yet thus offensively did Adam behave, spurning at the image of God, and quite defacing it from his soul.

3. Adam and all his posterity were ruined by this fatal transgression. It opened the sluice to all that flood of miseries that has overspread the face of the earth. At this gate sin and death entered into the world, where they will reign till time shall be no more. God is just and holy; and if the first sin had not deserved this punishment, it would not have been inflicted with such a mark of indignation.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. Say not when ye are tempted, it is but a little sin and therefore ye may act it. Consider, that which in the commission is but as the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, when God comes to judgment, or conscience gets up, will cover the face of the heavens. Little do ye know what a small temptation may be big with. A man may drown in a little rivulet as well as in the deep sea.

2. Then God's will is a sufficient bar to hold us back from any thing if we would be safe. And therefore let us know, that where there is no more to be a hedge to us but the bare command of God, if we leap over it, a serpent will bite us. Ah! how few know what it is to be restrained by a bare command of God! Ah! the generality leap over the hedge of God's will and law, and live as if their were no restraint upon them from the God of heaven, who will severely punish all transgressions of his law.

3. Beware of the pleasure of your senses, and the pride of life. The lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh ruined the world at first, and do so still. The devil shoots his darts by the eye into the soul, which is weaker now than it was in the primitive state, and more liable to deception. Therefore watch your eyes and ears. Have a care of sensuality. Eating ruined Adam and Eve; and

still ruins many, who eat not for God or his glory, but to satisfy their sensual appetite, as they did.

4. *Lastly*, O prize Christ, who to redeem lost man, did hang upon a tree, and drink the cup of wrath as the bitter fruits of sin, and was buried in a garden. The first Adam ate of the forbidden tree, and Christ hung on the cursed tree. Adam's preposterous love to his wife made him sin, and Christ's love to his spouse made him suffer. Our first parents pleased their sensual appetite with the taste of the pleasant fruit of the forbidden tree, and therefore Christ got vinegar mixed with gall to drink upon the cross-tree. Adam sinned in a garden, and in a garden was Christ buried. By eating the forbidden fruit, death came upon all men to condemnation; and by eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, life is brought to the soul. O then, sinners, flee unto the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath restored that which the first Adam took away; and ye shall be reinstated in all that happiness and favour with God which he forfeited by eating the forbidden fruit.

OF OUR FALL IN ADAM.

ROMANS v. 19.—*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

THIS text consists of two propositions. The first is, *By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.* Where consider,

1. Who that one man was. It was Adam. This is plain from ver. 14. and to no other can it agree.

2. What that disobedience of his was. It was his first sin, the eating of the forbidden fruit. This was that sin that first broke into the world, and opened the door to death, ver. 12. This was the transgression of Adam, ver. 14. *that offence* or fall, ver. 15. *the offence of one*, or, as the Greek will bear, *the one offence* 'tou henos paraptomati,' here called *disobedience*, for thereby he hearkened to the devil, not to God.

3. Whom it concerned; *many*. This is in effect the same with the *all* mentioned, ver. 14. But the alteration of the phrase is not without reason: for there is an exception here of the man Christ, of whom he speaks in the next clause. It reached many men, but not all simply; he, and he only, was excepted.

4. How it touched them; they were *made sinners* by it. Now, there are only two ways how men might be made sinners by the

disobedience of Adam, viz. either by imputation or imitation. The last is not meant. (1.) Because some of those many who are made sinners, are not capable of imitation or actual sin, viz. infants. (2.) Because we are made righteous, not by the imitation, but imputation, of Christ's righteousness; but as we are made righteous by the one, so we are made sinners by the other.

5. The foundation of this imputation, which is a relation betwixt the *one* and the *many* here implied; for unless there had been some bond of union betwixt the one and many, the sin of that one could not have been imputed to the many. There was indeed a natural bond betwixt him and us: but this was not the ground of the imputation; for we have such an union with our immediate parents, whose sin is not thus imputed. It behoved then to be a moral bond, by the way of a covenant, he being the representative of many in the covenant of works. From these words there arises this doctrine, viz.

Doct. 'The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.'

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What sin of Adam's it was that they who sinned and fell with him, sinned and fell in.

II. Who they were that sinned and fell in Adam.

III. How the first sin of Adam comes to be imputed to us.

IV. Conclude with some inferences.

I. I am to shew what sin of Adam's it was that they who sinned and fell with him, sinned and fell in. It was his first sin, the eating of the forbidden fruit. That sin is also their sin. This was the sin that broke the covenant of works. Other sins of Adam are not imputed to them, more than those of any other private persons. For he was a head only of obedience, not of suffering. So then, Adam quickly betaking himself to the covenant of grace, and placing himself under another head as a private man, ceased to be the head in the covenant of works. Adam had all his children in one ship to carry them to Immanuel's land; by his negligence he dashed the ship on a rock, and broke it all in pieces; and so he and his lay foundering in a sea of guilt: Jesus Christ lets out the second covenant as a rope to draw them to the shore. Adam for himself lays hold on it, while others hold by the broken boards of the ship, till they be by the power of grace enabled to quit them too, as he was.

II. I proceed to shew who they were that sinned and fell in

Adam. They were all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation. So,

1. Christ is excepted. Adam's sin was not imputed to the man Christ. This is plain from Heb. vii. 26. He was *separated from sinners*, and was not infected with the plague whereof he was to be the cleanser. And so Christ comes not in under Adam as head, but, as in the text, is opposed to Adam as another head.

Christ was indeed a Son of Adam, as appears from his genealogy brought up to Adam, Luke iii. And it was necessary he should be so, that he might be our near kinsman, and that the same nature that sinned might suffer. But he came not of him by ordinary generation: the extraordinariness of his descent lay in that he was born of a virgin. And upon this account he came not in under Adam in the covenant of works; for Christ was not born by virtue of that blessing of marriage given before the fall, Gen. i. 28. but by virtue of a covenant-promise made after the fall, Gen. iii. 15. So that Adam could represent none in that covenant, but such as were to spring from him by virtue of that blessing.

2. All mankind besides sinned and fell with Adam in that first transgression. His sin of eating the forbidden fruit is imputed to them; *i. e.* is reckoned theirs, as if they had committed it. Consider,

(1.) The scripture plainly testifies, that all sinned in him, Rom. v. 12. 'By one man's sin, death entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Hence it is plain, that death has not come into the world but in pursuit of sin; all die, for all have sinned. Infants are not exempted more than others. We see graves of an infant's length; yea, sometimes the womb is made their grave, and they get a coffin instead of a cradle. It is long ere infants laugh, but they come into the world crying; a sure evidence of misery. What have they done? What could they do? Yet God is just, and is not pursuing innocents. What then can be the quarrel but this, that they are taken prisoners for the debt contracted by their father? ver. 14.

(2.) All fell with him into misery by that sin. Now, a just God will not involve the innocent with the guilty in the same punishment. Consider,

[1.] All fell under the guilt of eternal wrath for that sin, Rom. v. 16, 18. 'The judgment was by one to condemnation.—By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.' Now, where there is a communion of guilt there must needs be a communion of sin; for the law can bind none over to punishment but for sin. 'All die in Adam,' says the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

but it is only the soul that sins that shall die, Ezek. xviii. 4. therefore all sinned in Adam.

[2.] All fell under the loss of God's image, and the corruption of nature with him. How comes it that all men must say with David, Psal. ii. 5. 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me?' Take away the imputation of Adam's sin, and there is no foundation for the corruption of nature. It must be some sin that God punishes with the deprivation of original righteousness, which can be no other than the first sin of Adam.

[3.] All the punishments inflicted on Adam and Eve, for that sin, as specified in Gen. iii. are common to mankind, their posterity; and therefore the sin must be so too.

III. I come now to shew how the first sin of Adam comes to be imputed to us. The great reason of this is, because we are all included in Adam's covenant. The covenant was made with him, not only for himself, but for all his posterity. Consider here,

1. It was the covenant of works that was made with Adam, the condition whereof was perfect obedience. This was the first covenant. As for the covenant of grace, it was made with the second Adam.

2. It was made with him for himself. That was the way he himself was to attain perfect happiness; his own stock was in that ship.

3. It was made not only for himself, but for all his posterity descending from him by ordinary generation. So that he was not here as a mere private person, but as a public person, the moral head and representative of all mankind. Hence the scripture holds forth Adam and Christ, as if there had never been any but these two men in the world, 1 Cor. xv. 47. 'The first man is of the earth, earthy, (says he): the second man is the Lord from heaven.' And this he does, because they were two public persons, each of them having under them persons represented by them, Rom. v. 14, 18. 'Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' This is plain from the imputation of Adam's sin, which necessarily requires this as the foundation of it. We being thus included and represented in that covenant, what he did he did as our head, and therefore it is justly imputed to us.

But some may be ready to say, we made not choice of Adam for that purpose. *Ans.* (1.) God made the choice, who was as meet to make it for us as we for ourselves. And 'who art thou that re-

pliest against God.' (2.) Adam was our natural head, the common father of us all, Acts xvii. 26. and who was so meet to be trusted with the concerns of all mankind as he? But to clear further the reasonableness of this imputation, and to still the murmuring of proud nature against the dispensation of God, consider,

1. Adam's sin is imputed to us, because it is ours. For God doth not reckon a thing ours, which is not so, Rom. ii. 2.—'The judgment of God is according to truth.' For God's justice doth not punish men for a sin which is in no way theirs. And it is our sin upon the account aforesaid. Even as Christ's righteousness is ours by virtue of our union with him. As if a person that has the plague infect others, and they die, they die, by their own plague, and not by that of another.

2. It was free for God, antecedently to the covenant made with man, either to have annihilated all mankind, or if he had preserved them, to have given them no promise of eternal life in heaven, notwithstanding by natural justice they would have been liable to his wrath in case of sin. Was it not then an act of grace in God to make such a rich covenant as this? and would not men have consented to this representation gladly in this case?

3. Adam had a power to stand if he would, being made after the image of God, Gen. i. 26. He was set down with a stock capable to be improved to the eternal upmaking of all his posterity. So that he was as capable to stand as any afterwards could be for themselves: and this was a trial that would soon have been over, while the other would have been continually a-doing, had men been created independent on him as their representative.

4. He had natural affection the strongest to engage him. He was our father, and all we the children that were in his loins, to whom we had as good ground to trust as to any other creature.

5. His own stock was in the ship; his all lay at stake as well as ours. Forgetting our interest, he behoved to disregard his own, for he had no separate interest from ours.

6. If he had stood, we could never have fallen; he had gained for us eternal happiness; the image of God, and the crown of glory, would have descended from him to us by a sure conveyance.

And is it not reasonable, on the other hand, that if he fell, we should fall and bear the loss? No man quarrels, that when a master sets his land in tack to a man and his heirs upon conditions, if the first possessor break the bargain, the heirs be denuded of it.

7. *Lastly*, All that quarrel this dispensation must renounce their part in Christ: for we are made righteous by him, as sinners are made guilty by Adam. If we fall in with the one, why not with

the other? We chose Christ for our head in the second covenant, no more than we did Adam in the first covenant.

A few inferences shall conclude this subject.

1. Hence see the dreadful nature of sin; one sin could destroy a whole world. What a plague of plagues must this sin be, that has swept away not families, towns, and countries only, but the whole race of mankind! View it in this glass, if you would know it aright.

2. Let this be a lesson to parents. Adam's fall should be a watch-word to every parent, to endeavour by all means to do nothing that may bring ruin on their children. Many times children are destroyed by their parents through their bad example, and their omission of exercising proper discipline and correction on them. Ye that are parents, give your children a good and pious example, accompanied with wholesome precepts and instructions. And watch over and narrowly observe their behaviour, and pray for and with them, that they may be delivered from wrath and condemnation.

3. This doctrine affords a lesson of humility to all. The rich have no cause to boast of their wealth and abundance; for they have a sad heritage left to them; and the poor and needy have the very same. If one man be better than another, no thanks to us; for we are all alike by nature.

4. Hence view and wonder at the redemption purchased for poor fallen sinners by the obedience and death of Christ. Behold here the necessity of it: What could they do for their help that came into the world under a sentence of condemnation?—the seasonableness of this deliverance, when the sentence was passed on all:—the perfection of it; it takes away this first sin, and all others too. How strong must the power of the grace of Christ be, that could stop the torrent of Adam's sin, when increased with innumerable actual transgressions? Rom. v. 16.

5. *Lastly*, Quit your hold of the first Adam and his covenant, and come to and unite with Christ by faith, and lay hold on his covenant, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Flee to and make use of his blood for the taking away of the first sin in particular, and mourn for it before the Lord. If this be not removed, it will ruin you. And to stir you up to a concern about this sin, consider how we are naturally writing after this copy, by our unbelief of the word, our affecting mainly what is forbidden, &c. as I shewed before. The offer of Christ as a Saviour from sin is made to you; and ye are called to embrace him as a Saviour to you in particular. Accept the offer, as ye regard the salvation of your souls; otherwise you will be ruined, not only by the breach of the first covenant, but by despising the second, which is the only means devised by infinite wisdom for the recovery of fallen sinners.

OF THE SINFULNESS OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

PSAL. li. 5.—*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

MAN that was holy and happy is now fallen; and his fall should never be forgotten, but lamented, though it were with tears of blood. Man's first sin was the spring of all our woes, the poisonous fountain from whence all our misery flowed. It brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery; a state wherein man can do nothing but sin, wherein every thought, every word, and every action is tainted with sin, wherein enmity to God and his holy nature, and rebellion against and opposition to his righteous law universally reign and prevail. In this dismal state to which mankind are reduced by the fall, no true holiness is attainable, for it is a state of sin; and no salvation from wrath can be had, for it is a state of misery. The state we must be brought into, out of our sinful and miserable state under the breach of the covenant of works, if we would attain unto salvation, is the state of grace under the new covenant. Those that are delivered from their natural state, under the broken covenant, are persons effectually called by grace, and are 'in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 1. Those that are still under the bondage of the old covenant, are out of Christ, and 'have no hope,' Eph. ii. 12. This state is a very sinful and miserable state. For the power that the covenant of works has over them, is a commanding, cursing, and condemning power: it commands them to yield perfect obedience, under pain of the curse, but affords no strength for performing it; and it curses and condemns them for every the least failure. The source of all is the total corruption and depravity of human nature, which we derive from our first father, in whom we all sinned, and with whom we fell, in his first transgression. In the text we have,

1. A plain confession of the being of original sin. Here is *sin* and *iniquity*, which the Psalmist owns he had while yet in the womb, *sin* in which he was *shapen*, and *iniquity* in which he was *conceived*. This was not peculiar to the Psalmist, but is common to all mankind sprung in an ordinary way from the first transgressor Adam.

2. The way of the conveyance of this original sin, viz. by natural generation. In this way every son and daughter of Adam are infected with this leprosy.

3. The malignant efficacy it hath on men's lives; *Behold*, says David, *I was shapen in iniquity, &c.* He points out original sin as

the fountain of all his actual transgressions. For how can a corrupt fountain send out wholesome streams?

The doctrine observable from the text is,

Doct. 'The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.'

In discoursing from this doctrine I will shew,

I. That there is such a thing as original sin.

II. Wherein original sin consists.

III. Deduce some inferences for application.

I. Our first business is to shew, that there is such a thing as original sin. Of this we have melancholy proofs.

1. Consider scripture-testimonies. In the text we have David, a man after God's own heart, yet confessing he was *shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin.* Adam begets Seth, from whom the whole race of mankind derive their origin, after 'his own image,' Gen. v. 1. opposed to 'the image of God,' after which he was made, Gen. i. 26. consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Job says chap. xiv. 4. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' This is God's verdict on all mankind, Gen. vi. 5. 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.'

2. This is plain from the case of infants, which we all once were. We may plainly read in their faces, that we are covered over with sin and guilt before any other covering come on us. For, (1.) What else mean scripture-ordinances about them? If there were not in them a superfluity of naughtiness, why were they circumcised? if they are not unclean, why are they baptised? This corruption of human nature was also shadowed forth by the law, concerning purifying of women. (2.) Consider the sad effects of sin upon them, which meet them as soon as they come into the world, yea in the womb, such as sickness, pains, death, &c., which says, that 'by nature we are the children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3. (3.) Consider the early appearances of Adam's image in them, before ever they come to the use of reason. What a deal of pride, ambition, curiosity, vanity, wilfulness, and averseness to good, appears in them; and when they creep out of infancy, what obstinacy and incorrigibleness appears in them; so that there is a necessity of using the rod of correction to drive away the foolishness that is bound in their heart, Prov. xxii. 15.

3. The universal necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature, John iii. 3. 'Except a man be born again,

he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Were we not disjointed by nature, what need would there be for us to be taken down, and put up again? If the first birth were right, what need would there be for a second?

II. I come now to shew wherein original sin consists. It consists in these three things: the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature.

First, Original sin consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin. Guilt is an obligation to punishment. For this sin, which is ours by imputation, we are liable to punishment. This guilt lies on all men by nature, Rom. v. 18. And this guilt of Adam's first sin is original sin imputed; of which I spoke in the former discourse. The only remedy for it is in Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Eph. i. 7. Rom. iii. 24.

Secondly, It consists in the want of original righteousness. Original righteousness is that righteousness and entire rectitude of all the faculties of the soul wherein man was created. Man's soul was so adorned with it, that it resembled its great Maker. But now man is stript of these ornaments, he is left quite naked.

1. There is a want of that knowledge in the mind wherewith man was created. That light that was set up in the soul of man is now gone; though the candlestick is not removed, the candle is, Job xi. 12. 'For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.' The mind is like the ostrich, whom God hath deprived of understanding. 'The understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in men, because of the blindness of their heart, Eph. iv. 18. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can ye know them, because they are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 14.

2. That righteousness which was in the will of man, that bent and inclination to good, is now removed, Eccl. vii. 29. 'I know [says the apostle] that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not,' Rom. vii. 18.

3. The holiness of the affections is gone. Spiritual affections have taken the wing, and left the soul as a bird without wings which hath nothing whereby it can mount, Rom. vii. 18. forecited.

This want of original righteousness is a sin, being a want of conformity to the law of God, which requires all moral perfection. It is also a punishment of sin, and so is justly inflicted by God. And though the want of this righteousness be sin, yet God's depriving man of it, or rather not giving it him, is a most just act; seeing

Adam, having got it for himself and his posterity, threw it away, and God is not obliged to restore it. And it can be no other sin but the first sin, whereof this with-holding of original righteousness is the punishment. So true it is, that if the imputation of Adam's first sin be denied, original sin is quite rased, there is no foundation left for it.

Thirdly, It consists in the corruption of the whole nature. Concerning which two things are to be considered.

1. That the nature of man is indeed corrupted, We must not think that original sin lies only in the want of original righteousness. No, man is not only void of good qualities naturally, but he is filled with evil ones.

(1.) The scripture holds it forth so, while it calls this sin 'the flesh which lusteth against the Spirit, the old man, the body of death, the law of the members warring against the law of the mind, &c.

(2.) The soul of man cannot be otherwise. It must needs be morally right or wrong; either it is habitually conformable to the law of God, or not; if it be not, its inclinations are against it. The soul has either God's image or that of the devil upon it. If there is not light in the mind, there must be darkness there.

2. Consider the nature and extent of this corruption. As to its extent,

1*st*. All men are corrupted. There is no exception of any one of Adam's posterity descending from him by ordinary generation: Gen. vi. 5. 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' Job xiv. 4. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' The Virgin Mary, of the substance of whose body the holy human nature of Christ was formed by the operation of the Holy Spirit, is included among the rest. Even the children of holy parents are corrupted; for generation is by nature, not by grace. The circumcised father begets an uncircumcised child, as the purest corn that is sown produceth chaff.

2*dly*, All of every man is corrupted; it is a leprosy that has overspread universally; a leaven that hath leavened the whole lump. It has overspread,

1. The soul in all its faculties, Tit. i. 15. 'Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.'

1*st*, If we look to the understanding, there we will see,

(1.) Darkness over all that region. It is the land of darkness and shadow of death, where the very light is darkness; darkness in

the abstract, Eph. v. 8. We are born blind, and cannot be restored without a miracle. There is a dreadful stupidity in spiritual things; the natural man cannot take them up, 1 Cor. ii. 14.; but he is a fool, and a madman, because in these things he is a mere natural.

(2.) A bitter root of unbelief naturally grows there, which overspreads the whole life. Men by nature are 'children of disobedience,' Eph. ii. 2. Or, 'of impersuasibleness.' How like Adam do we look! how universally is that article embraced, 'Ye shall not surely die!' and how does it spread itself through the lives of men, as if they were resolved to fall after the same example of unbelief!

2*dly*, As for the will, call it no more will, but lust. It is free to evil but not to good. 'God made man upright,' his will straight with his own, with a power in the will to do good and an inclination and bent thereto. But now behold in it,

(1.) A pitiful weakness. Man naturally cannot will what is good and acceptable to God. He cannot produce one holy act until grace change the heart, more than a stone can feel, or a beast reason. Hence the apostle says, Phil. ii. 13. 'It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Rom. v. 6. 'We are without strength.' 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.' Men by nature are dead spiritually 'dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1. If they will what is good, it is in a carnal manner.

(2.) An aversion to good. We are backward to it, and therefore must be drawn as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Sin is the natural man's element; and as the fish is averse to come out of the water, so is the sinner from the puddle of sin, in which he delights to lie. Hence says our Lord, John v. 40. 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.' They were not only naturally unable to come, but they had no inclination to the duty. Their stomachs are full, and, like the full soul that loaths the honey-comb, they nauseate the heavenly food in their offer.

(3.) There is a proneness to evil, a bent and inclination to it, Hos. xi. 7. 'My people are bent to backsliding from me.' Hence natural men are mad on idols. Set sin and duty, death and life, cursing and blessing before the natural man, and leave the will to itself, it will naturally run to sin, to death, and the curse, as the waters run down a steep place.

(4.) There is a crossness and contrariety in the will to God and goodness, Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' That God forbids a thing is a motive to the will to like it. No fruit is so sweet to the corrupt appetite as the forbidden fruit.

Strip sin naked of all its ornaments and allurements, and the natural man will court it for itself. The will naturally lies cross to God.

(1.) It is cross to his nature. He is holiness itself; and the will rejects holiness for itself. Hence men 'say to God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. The will is an enemy to the scripture God, and hence they do what they can for the change, Psal. l. 21. It was most agreeable to nature, that the Pagans made their gods profane. The proud man desires to have none above him to controul him, or call him to account, and the natural man wants to have no God, Ps. xiv. 1.

(2.) It is cross to his will. (1.) To his law, which binds to conformity to God, which the natural man hates, Rom. viii. 7. Corrupt nature rises against this yoke: they would have the law brought down to their corruptions. Hence that is a distinguishing mark of the godly man, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law doth he meditate day and night,' Psal. i. 2. (2.) To his gospel. The will of man naturally is quite opposite to the grand device of salvation through the Lord Jesus; and natural men, like Judas, would rather hang themselves than go to Christ, submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. They say, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' Luke xix. 14. The gospel is designed for humbling the pride and selfishness of men; but they are for exalting self, and placing it on the throne. It lies cross to the will of God in its chief acts.

(1.) As to the intention, the will is wholly cross and perverse as to the ultimate end. Self is set up for the chief end instead of God, 2 Tim. iii. 2. 'Men shall be lovers of their own selves.' In this we follow our first father's footsteps. The will is like a traitor, who, instead of gathering in the rents of the crown to the king, gathers them in to itself.

(2.) As to the choice, Psal. iv. 6. 'There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?' God offers himself to be the sinner's portion; but he chuses the creatures for his portion, and sin for the way to obtain it.

(5.) There is contumacy in it. The will is wilful in evil and will not be turned, though it should run on the sword-point of vengeance, Ezek. xviii. 31. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Like the leviathan in his way, it 'laugheth at the shaking of a spear,' Job xli. 29. 'I shall have peace (says the natural man), though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst,' Deut. xxix. 19. This is the stony heart, which as a stone is insensible, resisting, inflexible, but by the power of divine grace, hard to receive impressions, but as the water to let them go.

3dly, As to the affections, they are quite disordered. While man stood, his reason was subject to the law, and his affections to his reason: but now, like the unruly horse, they will either not receive, or else run away with the rider, Jer. ii. 23, 24.

(1.) The affections are misplaced as to their objects. The natural man is a spiritual monster. His heart is there, where his feet should be, fixed on the earth; his heels are lifted up against Heaven, which his heart should be set on. He loves what he should hate, and hates what he should love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he should rejoice in; glories in his shame, and is ashamed of his glory; abhors what he should desire, and desires what he should abhor; acting in direct opposition to the apostolical injunction of 'seeking those things which are above,' Col. i. 1.

(2.) When the natural man's affections are fixed on lawful objects, they can keep no bounds. They cannot flow to the creature, without overflowing; they cannot love a lawful object, without overloving it; nor joy in any created comfort, without excess. The affections are never right, only evil.

Further, this corruption has spread even to the body. That which should be a temple for God is become a garrison of lusts.

1. It incites the soul to sin. What a snare is the temperature of the body to the soul, leading it to the commission of many foul sins! Therefore the godly beat it down as an unruly beast, keep it under, and bring it into subjection, that it cast not the soul into sin and misery, 1 Cor. ix. 27. It is the house wherein snares are spread for the soul; so that many, to please their bodies, make shipwreck of their souls.

2. Its members are members of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 13. Are not the eyes and ears the windows whereat death comes in to the soul? The tongue is an untamed beast, by which the impure heart vents its filthiness. The throat is an open sepulchre; the feet run the devil's errands; and the belly is made a god. The body is naturally an agent for Satan, and a magazine of armour against the Lord.

What shall we say? who can express the corruption of nature? The whole man is corrupted. All defilement is in us naturally, Rom. i. 29. The treasure of wickedness is in the heart, Matth. xii. 35. It is a cage full of unclean birds. The tongue is a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. What an universe of wickedness and impurity must the heart then be?

This is a rude draught of the corruption of human nature in its fallen state, which the Spirit of God in scripture calls *flesh*, in

many passages that might be quoted. The propriety of this expression will be evident from the following particulars.

1. It denotes the degrading and debasing malignity that is in sin, which unspirits and unsouls a man, if I may be allowed such expressions. A sinner is called a carnal man, a man made up of nothing but a lump of dull flesh kneaded together without spirit. And therefore the apostle, Rom. viii. 13. does not bid men mortify the deeds of their souls, but of their bodies, because wicked men act as if they had no souls, or at least not so noble a soul as the rational one is.

2. It denotes what it is that sin tends unto. It is only to please and gratify the flesh; to pamper the body, that sensual, sordid, and baser part of man. The soul of the natural man acts for no higher end than the soul of a beast. The soul of a beast acts not for itself, but is made a drudge and underling to the body. It serves only to carry the body up and down to its pasture, and make it to relish its food and fodder. And thus it is with the souls of wicked men; they act not for themselves, but are only provisors for the body, that seek out and lay in provision for the flesh. Hence we have that exhortation, Rom. xiii. 14. 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

3. Though the soul be the chief seat of the flesh, yet the flesh is the great instrument by which it acts, Rom. vi. 19. Hence its actions are called 'the deeds of the body,' Rom. viii. 13. Though some sins are seated in the mind, as heresies, covetousness, malice, pride, &c. yet they are set down among the works of the flesh in the apostle's catalogue, Gal. v. 19, 20. And as to the sins of omission, they usually take their rise in men from some inordinate sensual affection to the creature, which causes them to omit their duty to God, but, generally speaking, most sins are acted by the flesh. When the devil would set up a kingdom in the hearts of men, he doth it by the flesh; for what is nearer and dearer to us than our flesh? and things pleasant and grateful to the flesh strongly promote his designs. These darken and blind their minds, corrupt their hearts, and entice and allure their affections; so that they hunt after them with an eager pursuit, to the wofnl neglect of God and their precious souls.

4. The disorder of the sensitive appetite, which inclines men to the interest and conveniences of the flesh, is the great cause of all sin; and therefore fallen man is represented in scripture as wholly governed by his sensual inclinations, Gen. vi. 3. John iii. 6. as if he had nothing in him but what is earthly and carnal. Our souls cleave so fast to the earth in our degenerate state, and are so much

addicted to the body, that they have lost their primitive excellence and beauty. Our understanding, will, and affections, are wofully distempered by our senses, and enslaved to the flesh. So that with great propriety corrupt nature is called *flesh* in scripture.

1. This corruption is most truly and properly sin, even in the regenerate, where the guilt of it is removed by the blood of Christ, and the power of it subdued by his Spirit and grace. And all the motions thereof in them are sin; as appears from what the apostle says, Rom. vii. 5, 7, 8. 'For when we are in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.' Gal. v. 17. 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

2. This corruption is exceeding sinful. For the law and covenant of works made with Adam, as the head and representative of all his posterity, required perfect obedience and conformity to God both in heart and life, to love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind. God placed him in a holy and happy state, endued him with his image, consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; and gave him sufficient power and ability to perform the duty he owed to his Lord, and to continue in the course of obedience, till he should be confirmed both in holiness and felicity. Now, man having by sin stript himself of the image of God, and rendered himself incapable of obeying God either in heart or life, the law still requires all the holiness and righteousness that it did when he was in his upright estate; and the want of conformity to the law of God must be exceeding sinful, as a breach of the law of God, and a trampling on his image. And, in order to affect us with a deep sense of the sinfulness of the total corruption of our nature, let us consider,

(1.) The pregnancy of this corruption. It is indeed all sin virtually, which is retailed out in many particular sinful acts. It contains in its bowels the seed and spawn of all wickedness whatsoever. All treasons and disobedience, rebellions and hostilities, against the supreme and sovereign majesty of heaven, are to be found in it. It is the nursery, seed, and womb, yea, every sin that is possible to be committed is in this womb, so conceived and formed, animated and brought to the birth, as there needs nothing

but a temptation and opportunity to bring it forth. It may be you never imbrued your hands in your brother's blood, as Cain did, nor have actually committed murder, yet the seed and spawn of it is lurking in thy heart; and the only reason why you have kept free from it is, because God hath restrained and kept thee back, and hath not suffered the like temptations and occasions to come in thy way. It may be you never set cities on fire, dashed out children's brains, ript up women with child, as Hazael did; yet all these sins are lurking in thy heart, though they were never acted by thine hands. Hazael was angry when the prophet told him so much, 2 Kings viii. 12. 13. but he acted all that afterwards and more, when he was advanced to his master's throne. He could not think that ever he could be guilty of such atrocious and detestable crimes, unless he were transformed into a dog. He was little acquainted with the desperate wickedness of man's nature, which habitually inclines him to the most barbarous and bloody cruelty.

2. This corruption that lies in the heart is the woful cause, source, and spring of all the actual transgressions which stain men's lives. Every wicked and sinful action derives its descent from this. From whence come murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, &c? Our Saviour tells us, Matt. xv. 19. They proceed out of the heart. If you will trace these streams to the true spring and fountain, you will find it to be the sin and wickedness of the heart. This is that seed and loathsome spawn to which all this detestable vermin owe their original. It is fruitful and productive of all manner of evils. It is that which fills people's mouths with cursing, swearing, lying, slandering, &c. makes their feet swift to shed blood, and puts the poison of asps under their tongue, Rom. iii. 14, 15. Yea, this defiles the whole man, and stains him with an universal pollution, Matth. xv. 18. As a lethargy in the head, or an indisposition in the stomach, diffuseth an universal malignity through the whole body, these being sovereign and principal parts in man; so this wickedness that dwells in the heart, poisons the whole life. Many a filthy and impure stream issues from this corrupt fountain.

(3.) Consider what a monstrous deformity it hath brought on the soul. The mind of man was the candle of the Lord. As it proceeded from God it was a lightsome beam, shining with more lustre and splendour than a ray of the sun. But now it is dark and obscure, and is become a stinking and noisome dunghill. It was once one of the brightest and most excellent pieces of the creation, next unto the angelical nature; but by sin it is transformed into an ugly monster. We justly reckon that birth monstrous, where the members have not their due place; when the head is where the feet

should be, or the legs in place of the arms, &c. Thus the noble powers and faculties of the soul are monstrously misplaced. That which should be highest is now lowest; that which should rule and keep the throne, is brought into a miserable subjection and bondage: that which should serve and obey, does now tyrannise and command. Passion over-rules reason, and the will receives laws from the fancy and appetite. In man's primitive state, the will was sovereign lord, reason was its counsellor, and appetite subject to both; but now it hath aspired and got above them, and ofttimes carries both into a servile compliance with the dictates of sense. Any spot or blemish upon the face of a beautiful child, when it comes but accidentally, grieves and afflicts the parents: how much more cause have we to bemoan the natural, universal, and monstrous deformity which has seized upon our souls?

4. Consider the devilishness of this corruption. There is nothing in all the world hath so much of the devil in it as sin. It is his first-born, the beginning of his strength; that which he hatched and brought into the world. It is his work and employment, his great master-piece, that wherein he applauds himself and glories, John viii. 44. This is his image that he hath drawn upon man. Those black characters which are drawn on the soul, are of Satan's impression. As face answers to face, so doth man's corrupt nature answer the nature of the devil. It hath all the essential parts of the diabolical nature. There is in it a strong aversion from all that is good, so is there in him; and a mighty propensity to all evil, so is it in the devil. It is Satan's correspondent, that maintains secret and constant intercourse with our mortal enemy. It is a domestic enemy, ready on all occasions to betray the soul into the hands of him, who is always going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. O, should it not deeply humble us before God, that we are so near a kin to hell, and have such a correspondence with the devil; that our corruption makes us so like unto him, and daily affords him so great an advantage against us?

(5.) Consider the brutishness of this corruption. Sin hurries the soul on with a blind rage and fury to such acts and motions, as men in their right reason would highly condemn. It is on this account that men are compared to brute-beasts and irrational creatures: as to the horse and the mule, to a wild ass, an untamed heifer, &c. The brute-creatures, though they be not capable to know God, yet they will know and take some notice of their benefactor, and such as feed and keep them. But men kick against God, they wound Christ, and reject and expel the Holy Spirit in his motions and operations. They bellow out reproaches against his servants, whom

he hath sent forth to feed and nourish their souls, Prov. xii. 1. The brutal creatures have a strong inclination to those things which tend to their health, and to the preservation and continuance of their life and strength; but sin makes men averse to their own happiness, and all the spiritual means which have a tendency thereunto. The beasts are afraid of that which is hurtful and destructive to their being: but sin pushes men on in the ways of death; and the paths which lead to eternal destruction. It is said, Job xi. 12. that 'man is born like a wise ass's colt.' He brings with him into the world a heart more wild, fierce, and untamed than any beast of the field.

6. Consider its vileness. There is nothing in the whole creation so detestable as sin. It is the abominable thing which the Lord hates. He cannot look upon it but with infinite abhorrence. There is nothing so base and so contemptible as sin. The scripture sets it forth under various notions, no single one being sufficient to express its vileness. It is called *flesh*, Gen. vi. 3. and Gal. v. 16, 17. This holds forth the vile degeneracy of man's soul since this corruption seized upon it. By creation it was pure and holy, heavenly and spiritual, near a-kin to the angels, yea, as like to the nature of God as a creature could be: but now it is transformed into flesh, made carnal, sensual, and devilish. It is vile both formally and effectively: filthy in itself, and hath made the whole man so. It is compared in scripture to those things which are most vile and detestable in the eyes of men, as filthy vomit, defiling mire, rotten members, putrifying sores, &c.

(7.) It excludes and debars from access to God and communion with him. There can be no friendship between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, between an infinitely pure and holy God, and vile filthy polluted sinners. We have an important question proposed, Psal. xxiv. 3. 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?' The answer is given, ver. 4. 'He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart: who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.' And we are told, Psal. v. 4, 5. 'Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' The heart is the temple of God, the chief place of his residence in man; and he will never dwell in it, unless it be made clean. There is no access to God here or hereafter without holiness, James iv. 8. Rev. xxi. ult.

8. *Lastly*, It exposeth to terrible wrath. It was sin that brought the deluge upon the old world: and it hath brought many fearful

plagues and judgments upon the new one since. And it is this that lays men open to the wrath and vengeance of God in the life that is to come. Hence they are called 'children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3. They are born to wrath by nature. This is their portion and inheritance. 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven (says the apostle) against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The curses and threatenings of the law proclaim the divine displeasure, and give warnings and intimations to sinners of what they are to expect. There is a day of wrath coming, and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, when the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. We are exposed to wrath on account of sin, in our conception, birth, life, and death, and through all eternity.

In the above three things, the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature, consists in original sin. These three things make up this monstrous body. There lies our sinfulness which we are brought into by the fall.

How this corruption is conveyed to all the children of men, the scripture, even the text, makes it plain, that it is conveyed by natural generation, so as all that proceed from Adam in the way of natural generation are infected with it. But if it be asked, how this original corruption is propagated from parents to children? how it comes to pass that our souls are defiled and tainted with original sin? Indeed the question is very hard and difficult. It may be this is one of those mysteries which are reserved for the world to come, about which we cannot in our present state solve every difficulty that may be moved. It is much more our duty and interest to be solicitous how to get sin out of our souls, than to pry and search into the way how it came into them. However, this is certain, that God doth not infuse it. Souls receive neither purity nor impurity from him, but only their naked essence, and the natural powers and properties flowing therefrom. He doth not infuse any impurity into men; for he cannot be the author of sin, who is the revenger of it. Nor doth he create men's souls in their original purity and rectitude; for the sin of Adam lost that, and God's justice withholds it from his posterity. As a pure and holy God, he cannot infuse any impurity into the souls of men; and as a just and righteous God, he may and doth withhold from, or create them void and destitute of, that holiness and righteousness which was once their happiness and glory. Again, it is probably thought by some, that original sin comes neither in by the soul alone, nor by the body alone, apart from the soul, but upon the union and con-

junction of both in one person. It is the union of these two that constitutes a child of Adam, and as such only we are capable of being infected with his sin.

Solid divines, without a daring intrusion into unrevealed secrets, proceed by the following steps in answering this question.

1. If it be demanded, How it comes to pass that an infant becomes guilty of Adam's sin? the answer is, Because he is a child of Adam by natural generation.

2. But why is he deprived of that original rectitude with which Adam was created? they answer, Because Adam lost it by his sin, and therefore could not transmit to his posterity what he had lost.

3. But how comes he to be inclined to that which is evil? the answer is, Because he wants that original rectitude, which Adam had when he was created. For whosoever wants original righteousness, inclines naturally to that which is evil. And so the propension of nature to that which is bad, seems to be by way of concomitancy with the want of original righteousness. No action can be holy which doth not flow from the image of God in the soul, as its root and principle. And therefore man being despoiled of this image of God, there is no action of any man in a state of nature but what is sinful and corrupt. But, as I said before, it much more concerns us how to get original corruption removed, than to inquire how it came in.

This corruption may well be called original sin, because we have it from our original, it being as old as ourselves; and because it is transmitted from Adam, the origin of mankind; and, which is the *Last* thing, because all actual transgressions proceed from it, Matt. xv. 19.; as I have already shewn.

I shall shut up this point with a few inferences.

1. No wonder then that we are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; that we are attacked and made prisoners as soon as we come into the world. This says that the straight way in the course of justice would be, that we go from the womb to the grave, and that the cradle be turned into a coffin. For, in a spiritual sense, we are all dead born; and no wonder that natural death should seize those that are spiritually dead; and that all sorts of miseries should pursue those that are destitute of every thing that is good.

2. There is no ground for parents to be lifted up on the account of children, however numerous and fair. For though they may have fair faces, they have foul and deformed souls by nature; and natural beauty is far outbalanced by spiritual ugliness. Parents had much need to carry them by faith and prayer to the fountain of Christ's blood, to get them washed and purified from their spiritual uncleanness.

3. This doctrine lets us see the absolute necessity of Christ as a Saviour, who alone is able to save us from the guilt of sin by his blood, and from the filth and pollution of it by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and from the dominion of it by the power of divine grace. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' John iii. 3.

4. *Lastly*, See the absolute necessity of mortification, of crucifying the flesh; for from it all actual sins proceed. A form of godliness will not do. No; we must strike at the root, otherwise the branches will never die. The consideration of the total corruption and depravation of our nature should make us all lie low in the dust before a holy God, watchful against every motion and temptation to sin, restless till we be delivered from it, and indefatigable in the course of the Christian warfare. And it calls every one to mourning and lamenting over the ruins of our nature, and to supplicating the God of all grace, that he may cleanse our polluted souls, and wash us from our sins in the blood of Jesus.

OF THE MISERY OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

ROM. v. 12.—*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

THESE words teach us a lesson that all the books of philosophers could never do. They were sensible of the depravity and misery of human nature; but how was it depraved, and what was the spring of all the troubles the life of man is exposed to, they were utterly ignorant. We all see a flood of misery let into the world; but what way the sluice was opened, we can only learn from divine revelation. And in this passage we have it, viz. *By one man sin entered into the world*, and misery followed it close at the heels. This one man was Adam, the natural root, and the federal head of all mankind, ver. 14. In the words we have,

1. A flood of misery passing over the world, *Death passed upon all men.* For understanding this, ye must compare it with Gen. ii. 17. 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' This awful threatening is marked to be accomplished here. *Death* there implies loss of communion with God, which was evident in the fulfilling of the threatening, Gen. iii. 24. when God drave out the man, viz. from paradise, and placed a heavenly guard to prevent man's access to the tree of life. It also implies a being under God's wrath

and curse, as the threatening imports. This is spiritual death. It further implies temporal death, a liableness to the miseries of this life and to death itself, Gen. iii. 16.—19.; and also eternal death; which appears from man's being excluded paradise and the tree of life, ver. 22. This threatened death, says the apostle, *passed upon all men.* 'It is appointed unto all men once to die.' viz. a natural death. There is no discharge in this war. All men are spiritually dead, dead to God and happiness. And they are all subject to eternal death, in the separation of both soul and body from God and the felicity of the other world.

2. How the sluice by which this misery has overflowed the world was opened. (1.) The personal cause was *one man*, viz. Adam. (2.) The real cause was his sin, the sin of eating the forbidden fruit. This sin was the sin of all: *for all* (viz. on whom death passed) *have sinned*, not in their own persons, for infants on whom death has passed, have not so sinned; but have therefore sinned in Adam. And this sin of the first man is the cause of all the misery that has overtaken the human race.

The text affords the following doctrine.

Doct. 'All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. That all mankind are made miserable.

II. That this misery came by their fall in Adam.

III. What that misery is that hath by the fall overtaken all mankind.

IV. Deduce some inferences for application.

I. That mankind, and all mankind, are made miserable, needs no laborious proof. Sad experience in all ages confirms the truth of this assertion. Troops of misery receive us as soon as we come into the world, whereof some one or other always accompany us till we be laid in the grave. Let men be clothed in rags, or wear a crown, the garment common to all is misery. Every sigh, tear, or sorrowful look, is a proof of this.

II. That this misery came upon men by the fall, is also clear from the text. Man came not out of God's hand with the tear in his eye, or sorrow in his heart, or a burden on his back. He never put on his dole-weed or mourning garment, till he had by sin made himself naked. Death never could enter the gates of the world, till sin set them wide open, Gen. iii. And then one sin let in the flood; and many sins followed and increased it. The first pilot dashed the ship on a rock, and then all that were in it were cast into a sea of

misery. Our first parents fell, and we being in them felt with them the sad and mournful effects of their fall.

III. I proceed to shew what that misery is which hath by the fall overtaken all mankind. It may be taken up in these three things.

1. Man's loss by the fall.

2. What he is brought under by it.

3. What he is liable to in consequence of it.

First, Let us view man's loss by the fall. He has lost communion with God. He enjoyed it before that fatal period; but now it is gone. It implies two things. 1. A saving interest in God as his God. Man could then call God his own God, his Maker, his Husband, his Friend, his Portion, being in covenant with him. 2. Sweet and comfortable society and fellowship with God: and all this without a mediator, God and man not having been enemies or at variance. This sweet and agreeable communion he lost, as appears from Gen. iii. 8. where it is said, 'They (our first parents) heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.' When God spoke to him before, it was refreshing and comfortable to him; but now it was a terror to him; evidently shewing that all correspondence was broke up.

Thus man lost God, Eph. ii. 12. the greatest and the fountain of all other losses. He is no more the God of fallen men, till by a new covenant they get a new interest in him. This is the greatest of all losses and miseries. Had the sun been for ever darkened in the heavens, it had been no such loss as this. God is the cause and fountain of all good; and the loss of him must be the loss of every thing that is good and excellent. Man is a mere nothing without God; a nothing in nature without his common presence, and a nothing in happiness without his gracious presence, Psal. xxx. 5. 'In his favour is life.' Psal. lxiii. 3. 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' That day man fell, the foundation of the earth was drawn away, and all fell down together; the soul and the life departed from all men, and left them all dead, having lost God, the fountain of life and joy. Hence we may infer,

1. Man is a slave to the devil, 2 Tim. ii. 26. When the soul is gone, men may do with the body what they will; and when God is gone, the devil may do with the soul what he will. Man without God is like Samson without his hair, quite weak and unable to resist his spiritual enemies, as Samson to oppose the Philistines. Satan has over men in nature the power of a master, Rom. vi. 16. so

that when he bids them go, they go; and when to come, they come; —that of a conqueror, and so he makes them his slaves and vassals; —and that of a jailor, keeping them fast bound in chains, so that they cannot escape from his clutches, Isa. lxi. 1.

2. Man has lost his covenant-right to the creatures which he had when in favour with his Maker; and therefore Adam was driven out of paradise. Men have no right to the creatures, or their service now, but that of common providence, until it be otherwise restored by their coming into the bond of the new covenant.

3. Hence man is in a fruitless search after happiness in the creatures, set, as a poor infant that hath lost the breasts, to suck at the dry breasts of the creatures, where nothing is to be met with but continued disappointments.

4. Man cannot help himself, John xv. 5. His help is alone in God in Christ, without whom one can do nothing. He is like a poor infant exposed, that cannot help itself, Ezek. xvi. He is like one grievously wounded, who can neither make a plaster for his wounds nor apply it. Ah! how miserable is the case of man under the fall!

SECONDLY, Let us consider what man is brought under by the fall.

1. He is brought under God's wrath. Hence sinners are said to be 'the children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3. Wrath in God is mixed with no perturbation, but is pure from all discomposure. It imports,

(1.) That sinners are under the displeasure of God. He can take no delight in them, but his soul loaths them. There is a holy fire of anger burning in his breast against them. Should the sun be continually under a cloud, and the heavens ever covered with blackness, what a miserable place would the world be? But that is nothing to the divine anger: 'Who knows the power of thine anger?' says the Psalmist, Psal. xc. 11.

(2.) God deals with them as with enemies, Nah. i. 2. 'God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries; and he reserveth wrath for his enemies,' Isa. i. 24.—'Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.' To have men in power enemies to us, is sad; but to have God an enemy, is beyond expression dreadful: seeing we can neither fight nor flee from him, and he can pursue the quarrel through all eternity.

2. They are under his curse, Gal. iii. 10. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' Now, God's curse is the binding over the sinner to all the direful effects of his wrath. This is the dreadful yoke

which the broken law wreaths about the neck of every sinner as in a natural state. God's curse is a tying of the sinner to the stake, that the law and justice of God may disburden all their arrows into his soul, and that in him may meet all the miseries and plagues that flow from the avenging wrath of God.

Thus every sinner, while in a natural state, is under the wrath and curse of God; a burden on him, that if not removed by him who was made under the law, and bore the curse thereof, will sink sinners into the lowest pit of hell.

THIRDLY, Let us next consider what man is liable to, both in this world and that which is to come.

First, In this world, he is liable.

1. To all the miseries of this life. Now these are twofold.

1*st*, Outward miseries. There is a flood of these that man is subject to; as,

(1.) God's curse upon the creature for our sake, Gen. iii. 17. 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake.' Under the weight of this curse the whole creation groans and travails in pain, longing for deliverance. It is not the groan of a wearied beast desiring to be disburdened of its load, but a groan the effect of the fall of man. The treason and rebellion of man against his rightful Lord and Sovereign, brought distress and misery upon all that was formed for his use; as when the majesty of a prince is violated by the rebellion of his subjects, all that belongs to them, and was before the free gift of the prince, is forfeited and taken from them. Their lands, palaces, cattle, even all that pertains to them, bear the marks of his sovereign fury. Consult Deut. xxviii. 15, &c.

(2.) Outward miseries, such as sword, famine, and pestilence. Many times the curse of the Lord makes the heavens as brass, and the earth as iron, binds up the clouds, and restrains their necessary influences, so that the fruits of the earth are dried up. It raises divisions, wars, and mutinies in a kingdom. All the confusions and disorders which are to be seen among men, are the woful fruits and native results of sin. It kindles and blows up the fire of discord in families, cities, and nations. This is that fury that brings a smoking fire-brand from hell, and sets the whole world in a combustion. Pride and ambition, covetousness and desire of revenge, have made the world a stage of the most bloody tragedies. We have some terrible threatenings with respect to these judgments, Deut. xxviii. Lev. xxvi. And they are all summed up in one verse, Ezek. v. 17. 'I will send upon you famine, and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee, and and I will bring the sword upon thee: I the Lord have spoken it.'

(3.) Miseries on men's bodies, sickness and bodily pains, as burning fevers, languishing consumptions, distorting convulsions, ugly deformities, gout and gravel, and all the dismal train of wasting diseases and acute pains. Sin hath made man's body a seminary of diseases, and planted in it the fatal seeds and principles of corruption and dissolution, and made him liable to attacks from all distempers, from the torturing stone to the wasting consumption.

(4.) On our estates, as losses, crosses, wrongs, and oppressions. How often do those in trade suffer heavy losses by the bankruptcies of their debtors, by unfair practices, and sinistrous dealings, by cheating and tricking, by extortion and rapine, &c?

(5.) On our names, by reproach, disgrace, &c. Many estates are blasted, and families reduced to poverty and contempt, which sometime have made a good figure in the world. People are made to groan under pinching straits and wants, and yet they seldom consider the bitter root from whence all this springs. It is sin that makes men poor, mean, low, and contemptible in the world, and that brings reproach and disgrace upon their names, Deut. xxviii. 37.

(6.) On our employments and callings. These are many times full of pain, labour, and disappointments. Men earn wages, and put it into a bag with holes, and they disquiet and vex themselves in vain. Whence are our cares and fears but from sin? Fear is the ague of the soul that sets it a shaking. Some fear want, and others alarms. Whence come all the disappointments of our hopes and expectations but from sin? When we look for comfort, there is a cross; where we expect honey and sweetness, there we find wormwood and gall.

(7.) On our relations, unequal uncomfortable marriages, false and treacherous friends, harsh and cruel masters, undutiful and unfaithful servants. It is sin that makes children ungrateful and undutiful to parents: they that should be as the staff of their parents' old age, are as a sword many times to pierce their hearts. It is sin that makes wives disobedient to their husbands, and to defile their beds.

2*dly*, Inward spiritual miseries: As (1.) 'Blindness of mind,' Eph. iv. 13. the devil putting out the eyes that would not receive the light of the gospel, 1 Cor. iv. 4. (2.) 'A reprobate sense,' Rom. i. 28. whereby men are left of God so as to have no sense of discerning betwixt good and evil, but take bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. (3.) 'Strong delusions,' 2 Thess. ii. 11. whereby men, forsaking the truth, doat on the fancies and imaginations of their own hearts, and embrace lies for solid truths. (4.) 'Hardness of heart,' Rom. ii. 5. whereby men's hearts are hardened from the fear of the

Lord, and proof against conviction, and means used for awakening them. (5.) 'Vile affections,' Rom. i. 26. eagerly desiring sin and vanity, and all manner of filthiness, without regard to the dictates of reason and a natural conscience. (6.) *Lastly*, Fear, sorrow, and horror of conscience, which torment men, embitter life, and often bring death in their train, Isaiah xxxiii. 14.

2. At the end of this life, man is liable to death, Rom. vi. 23. 'The wages of sin is death.' The soul must be separated from the body; the man falls into the hands of the king of terrors, and goes down to the house appointed for all living.

Object. But if these things be the effects of the fall, how comes it that those who are delivered from the curse of the law and the wrath of God by Jesus Christ, sustain these outward miseries, and die as well as others? *Ans.* Because the delivery is but imperfect; but when they shall be free from sin, they shall be free from all these. In the meantime there is a great difference betwixt them: for the sting of God's wrath as a judge is taken out of them to the godly, and they are not accomplishments of the threatenings of the covenant of works, Rom. vi. 14. but of those of the covenant of grace, Psal. lxxxix. 31, 32, 33. and why may not the Lord take some of those things threatened under the covenant of works, and give them a gospel-die, and inflict them according to the second covenant, as well as he does with the commands, which they are still obliged to obey?

Secondly, Let us consider what man is liable to in the world to come. He is liable to the pains of hell for ever. There the Jordan of wrath will overflow all its banks, and that throughout eternal ages. These pains of hell consist in two things, the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense.

1. In the punishment of loss. This is unspeakably great, and cannot be sufficiently set forth by the tongue of man. I shall only glance at it a little, without enlarging on particulars. (1.) They will lose all the good things which they enjoyed here in the world, their wealth, their riches, their profits and pleasures, and whatever things they set their heart on while here. (2.) The favourable presence and enjoyment of God and Christ. They will be for ever banished from the beatific vision of God in glory. For he will say to them at the last day, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Matth. xxv. 41. (3.) The blessed company and society of the holy angels and glorified saints in heaven. (4.) All the glory and blessedness above. (5.) All pity and compassion, having none to commiserate, their condition, or regard their pain. (6.) All hope and expectation of deli-

verance and outgate from their misery. (7.) All possibility of deliverance from their torments. The door of the pit shall be shut upon them for ever, and their fetters shall never be loosed. Thus sinners in hell shall lose every thing that is good and agreeable, even God the chief good, and all the happiness he has prepared for them that love him.

2. In the punishment of sense. They shall suffer the most grievous torments both in soul and body, and that without intermission, for evermore. These torments are beyond expression, and our most fearful thoughts cannot equal the horror of them. 'Who knows the power of thine anger?' says the Psalmist. No man can tell what those plagues and woes are which infinite justice and almighty power hath prepared for obstinate sinners. O that we may be prevailed upon to flee from this wrath that is to come, that so we may not fall into the hands of the living God, and may not be made the dreadful objects of everlasting vengeance.

I conclude with a few inferences.

1. See here the great evil of sin. Many reckon it but a small matter to transgress God's holy and righteous law. They can curse and swear, lie and steal, and commit many other enormous crimes, and yet have no trouble or remorse about it. But if they would consider the dreadful effects of sin, they would be of another mind. Sin is the worst of evils, and big with all kinds of evils whatsoever. It has brought a flood of miseries into the world, which has overflowed the whole creation, under the weight of which the earth and all its inhabitants are groaning. It is the great makebate between God and sinners; it has shut the door of access to God upon us, and exposed us to his wrath and curse in this life and that which is to come.

2. Woful is the case of all who are in a state of nature. They are far from God; they have no interest in or fellowship with him; they are under his wrath and curse, liable to all the miseries of this life, and to the vengeance of eternal fire in the world to come. They are fallen under the power and tyranny of the devil, and if mercy prevent not, shall dwell with him in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. Whatever your situation and circumstances in the world may be, O ye that are yet in your natural state, ye are in a miserable condition; for ye are without God, the fountain of all good. Ye may read, pray, and communicate, but ye can have no communion with God. Men may be pleased with and bless you; but ye are under God's wrath and curse; and will continue so till ye by faith embrace God in Christ as your God.

3. *Lastly*, Arise, O ye sinners who are yet in your natural state,

and depart; for this is not your rest. Come to the Lord Jesus, who alone can open the door of access to God, whose blood quenches the fire of wrath, and who can deliver from the curse of the law. Who would stay in a house ready to fall? who can sleep sound in a case where God is an enemy? Lay these things seriously to heart, and flee from the wrath ye lie under, for the plague is begun already; and speedily flee from the wrath to come: for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

OF ELECTION TO EVERLASTING LIFE.

EPH. I. 3, 4, 5.—*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*

THE answer to the question, 'Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?' contains two heads of doctrine of great importance in the Christian system, viz. the doctrine of election, and the covenant of grace, each of which I shall speak to distinctly. I shall discourse of the first from the text now read. In which we have,

1. A party brought out of their natural state into a state of salvation, ver. 3.—*Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.* For whereas by nature they were under the curse, now they are blessed, and that plentifully, with all blessings, not temporal only, but spiritual and heavenly, coming from heaven, and to be consummated there.

2. The person by whom they are brought into this state. It is by the Redeemer, as the purchaser. God the Father bestows them, as the Father of Christ, viz. for his sake. And they are blessed *in Christ*, upon account of his merit, and coming from him as their Head.

3. Who those are whom God brings out of their natural state into a state of grace; the elect, ver. 4, 5. *According as he hath chosen us in him, &c.* Where consider,

(1.) Election itself, *he hath chosen us*, separated us from others in his purpose and decree, selected us from among the rest of mankind, whom he passed by and left to perish in their natural state.

(2.) That to which they are elected: that is, to salvation, and the means leading thereto. The means are, sanctification, *that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love;* and adoption, ver. 5. that whereas they are by nature children of the devil, they should be children of God. The end is everlasting life in heaven; for that is imported in adoption, Rom. viii. 23. as the inheritance of the children of God.

(3.) Through whom this decree is to be executed, *in him;* that is, Christ, whom the Father chose to be the head of the elect, through whom he would save them.

(4.) When God elected them, *before the foundation of the world,* ere they were created; that is, from eternity; as appears from what our Lord says to his Father, John xvii. 24. 'Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world;' which can denote nothing else than from eternity.

(3.) That which moved him to elect them, *according to the good pleasure of his will;* that is, his mere good pleasure, so he would do it; and there was nothing without himself to move him thereto.

The words afford a foundation for the following doctrine.

Doct. 'God left not all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery, but having from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, brings them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.'

In illustrating this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What election is.

II. Who are elected.

III. What they are chosen to.

IV. The properties of this election.

V. That all the elect, and only they, are in time brought out of a state of sin and misery into a state of salvation.

VI. By whom they are saved.

VII. *Lastly,* Conclude with some improvement.

I. Our first business is, to shew what election is. It is that decree of God whereby some men are chosen out from among the rest of mankind, and appointed to obtain eternal life by Jesus Christ, flowing from the mere good pleasure of God; as appears from the text. So the elect are they whom God has chosen to everlasting life, Acts xiii. 48. God seeing all mankind lost in Adam from all eternity, in his decree separated some from among them, to be redeemed by his Son, sanctified by his Spirit, and brought to glory.

II. I proceed to shew who are elected. Who they are in particular, God only knows; but in general we say,

That it is not all men, but some only. For where all are taken, there is no choice made. To say that God has made choice, plainly

imports that others are not chosen, but passed by. And so there is another party of men who are reprobated; that is, whom God has not chosen to life, but has decreed to let them lie in their natural state, and to damn them for their sins, Jude 4; whom he shews not saving mercy unto, but hardens, they first hardening themselves, Rom. ix. 18. Here is no injustice in God, seeing he might have left all to perish as well as some. This is also clear from plain scripture, Mat. xx. 16, 'Many are called, but few chosen.' Whence also it is plain, that the elect are the lesser number of the world, Mat. vii. 13, 14. 'Enter ye in at the strait gate (says Christ); for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' They are a *little flock*, Luke xii. 32. Yet the efficacy of the Lord's love and Christ's death is more and greater than that of Adam's sin, seeing it is greater to save one soul than to ruin all. And further, the scripture teaches, that though God has his own of all sorts, yet this blessed company, God does not make up, chiefly of the highest and most honourable among men. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. 'Ye see your calling; how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.'

III. The next head is, to shew what they are chosen to.

1. They are chosen to be partakers of everlasting life. Hence the scripture speaks of some being 'ordained to eternal life,' Acts xiii. 48. and of 'appointing them to obtain salvation,' 1 Thess. v. 9. God appoints some to be rich, great, and honourable, some to be low and mean in the world; and others to be in a middle station, objects neither of envy nor contempt; but electing love appoints those on whom it falls to be saved from sin, and all the ruins of the fall; its great view is to eternal glory in heaven. To this they were appointed before they had a being.

2. They are chosen also to grace as the mean, as well as to glory as the end. God's predestinating them to eternal blessedness includes both, as in the text; and it further appears from 2 Thess. ii. 13. 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' Hence faith is held out as a certain consequent of election, Acts xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed.' The man who

intends to dwell in a house yet unbuilt, intends also the means by which it may be made a fit habitation. So God having from eternity pitched on a select number of the ruined race of mankind as objects of his love, and having predestinated them to everlasting life, intended also the means necessary and proper for obtaining that glorious end. And therefore there is no ground from the decree of election to slight the means of salvation. God has so joined the end and the means, that none can put them asunder.

IV. Let us consider the properties of election.

1. It is altogether free, without any moving cause, but God's mere good pleasure. No reason can be found for this but only in the bosom of God. There is nothing before, or above, or without his purpose, that can be pitched upon as the cause of all that grace and goodness that he bestows upon his chosen ones. There was no merit or motive in them, as Christ told his disciples, John xv. 16. 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.' His choice is antecedent to ours. The persons who are singled out to be the objects of his special grace, were a part of lost mankind, the same by nature with others who were passed by, and left to perish in their sin. When God had all Adam's numerous progeny under the view of his all-seeing eye, he chose some, and passed by others. He found nothing in the creature to cast the balance of his choice, or to determine it to one more than another. Those that were rejected were as eligible as those that were chosen. They were all his creatures, and all alike obnoxious to his wrath by sin. It was grace alone that made the difference. So the prophet argues, Mal. i. 2, 3. 'I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau.' And this is abundantly clear in the text. Why doth God write some men's names in the book of life, and leave out others? why doth he enrol some whom he intends to make citizens of Zion, and heirs of immortal glory, and refuse to put others in his register? The text tells us, it is the *good pleasure of his will.*

You may, says an eminent divine, render a reason for many of God's actions, till you come to this, which is the top and foundation of all; and this act can be reduced to no other head of reason, but to that of his royal prerogative. If you inquire, why doth God save some, and condemn others at last? the reason is, because of the faith of the one, and the unbelief of the other. But why do some men believe? It is because God hath not only given them the means of grace, but accompanied these means with the power and efficacy of the Spirit. But why did God accompany these means

with the efficacy of his Spirit in some, and not in others? It is because he decreed by his grace to prepare them for glory. But why did he decree and chuse some to glory, and not others? Into what can you resolve this, but only into his sovereign pleasure? Salvation and damnation at the last upshot are acts of God as the righteous Judge and Governor of the world, giving life and eternal happiness to believers, and inflicting death and eternal misery upon unbelievers, conformable to his own law. Men may render a reason for these proceedings. But the choice of some and the preterition of others, is an act of God as he is a sovereign monarch, before any law was actually transgressed, because not actually given. What reason can be given for his advancing one part of matter to the noble dignity of a star, and leaving another part to make up the dark body of the earth? to compact one part into a glorious sun, and another part into a hard rock, but his royal prerogative? What is the reason that a prince subjects one malefactor to condign punishment, and lifts up another to a place of profit and trust? It is merely because he will, Rom. ix. 18. Hence we may infer,

(1.) That God did not chuse men to everlasting life and happiness for any moral perfection that he saw in them; because he converts those, and changes them by his grace, who are most sinful and profligate, as the Gentiles, who were soaked in idolatry and superstition. He found more faith among the Romans, who were Pagan idolaters, than among the Jews, who were the peculiar people of God, and to whom his heavenly oracles were committed. He planted a saintship at Corinth, a place notorious for the infamous worship of Venus, a superstition attended with the grossest uncleanness; and at Ephesus, that presented the world with a cup of fornication in the temple of Diana. And what character had the Cretians from one of their own poets, mentioned by the apostle in his epistle to Titus, whom he had placed among them to further the progress of the gospel, but the vilest and most abominable liars, and not to be credited; evil beasts, not to be associated with; slow bellies, fit for no service. Now what merit and attractive was here? What invitements could he have from lying, beastliness, and gluttony, but only from his own sovereignty? By this he plucked firebrands out of the burning, while he left straiter and more comely sticks to consume to ashes.

(2.) God doth not chuse men to grace and glory for any civil perfection that is in them; because he calls and renews the most despicable. He doth not elevate nature to grace on account of wealth or honour, or any civil station or dignities in the world, 1 Cor. i. 26. forecited. A purple robe is very seldom decked and adorned with

the jewel of grace. He takes more of the mouldy clay, than of refined dust, to cast into his image, and lodges his treasures more in the earthly vessels, than in the world's golden ones. Should God impart his grace most to those who abound in wealth and honour, it had laid a foundation for men to think, that he had been moved by those vulgarly esteemed excellencies, and to indulge them more than others. But such a conceit languisheth, and falls to the ground, when we behold the subjects of divine grace as void originally of any allurements as they are full of provocations.

(3.) Their foreseen faith and good works, or perseverance in either of them, are not the cause of election; because these are the fruits and effects, and therefore cannot be the causes of election, Rom. viii. 29. Acts. xiii. 48. It is clear also from this text, where it is said, they are chosen to be holy, and to adoption, and therefore to faith, by which we obtain it, John. i. 12. God did not chuse and elect men to grace and glory because they were holy, or because he did foresee that they would be so, but that he might purify and make them holy. And let it be observed, that the scripture attributes election only to God's good pleasure, Rom. ix. 11, 13, 16. Mat. xi. 25. And indeed, if it depended on foreseen faith or good works, we should rather be said to chuse God than he to chuse us.

4. God did not chuse some to life and happiness, because he was under any obligation to do so. He is indebted to none, and he is disobliged by all. He was under no tie to pity man's misery, and repair the ruins of the fall. He owes no more debt to fallen man than to fallen angels, to restore them to their first station by a superlative grace. God as a Sovereign gave laws to man, and strength sufficient to observe them. Now, what obligation is upon God to repair that strength which man hath wilfully lost, and to pull him out of that miserable pit into which he had voluntarily plunged himself? None at all. So then there was nothing in the elect more than others to move God to chuse them either to grace or glory. It was, and must be, the gracious issue and result of his sovereign will and mere good pleasure.

2. Election is eternal. They are elected from all eternity, Eph. i. 4. *chosen before the foundation of the world*, 2 Tim. i. 9. 'He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' All God's decrees are eternal, Eph. i 11. 'We are predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. God takes no new counsels, to do which would be inconsistent with his infinite perfection. Because God is eternal, his purposes must

be of equal duration with his existence. And to imagine that an infinitely wise and sovereign Being existed from eternity, without any forethought, or resolution what to do, would be to suppose him to be undetermined or unresolved, at the time of his giving being to all things. And to suppose that the divine will is capable of new determinations, is to argue him to be imperfect; which would be as much an instance of mutability in him, as for him to alter his purpose. Election to everlasting life, must therefore be eternal.

3. It is particular and definite. God has chosen a certain number of the children of men to life, whom he knows by name, so as they can neither be more nor fewer. Hence their names are said to be written in the book of life, Luke x. 20. Phil. iv. 3. and others are said not to be written there, Rev. xvii. 8. Though they are known to none, yet God knows them all, 2 Tim. ii. 19. And they are given to Christ, John xvii. 9. Therefore God's decree of election is not a general decree only to save all that shall believe and persevere in the faith; for that way it might happen that none at all might be saved.

4. It is secret, or cannot be known, till God be pleased to discover it. Hence it is called 'the mystery of his will,' Eph. i. 9. as being hid in God from before the foundation of the world, and would for ever have been so, had he not discovered it in his word.

It is unchangeable. Mutability is an imperfection peculiar to creatures. As the least change in God's understanding, so as to know more or less than that hid from eternity, would be an instance of imperfection; the same must be said with respect to his holy will, which cannot be susceptible of new determinations. Though there are many changes in the external dispensations of his providence, which are the result of his will, as well as the effects of his power; yet there is no shadow of change in his purpose. No unforeseen occurrence can render it expedient for God to change his mind, nor can any higher power oblige him to do it; nor can any defect of power to accomplish his design, induce him to alter his purpose. Those who are once elected can never be reprobated. All that are elected shall most certainly be saved. None of them can be left to perish. For all the divine purposes are unchangeable, and must be fulfilled, Isa. xlvi. 10.; and this in particular, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Election is the foundation of God's house, laid by his own hand, which cannot be shaken, but stands sure; and a sealed foundation, as men seal what they will have; a seal of two parts securing it; on God's part, God loves and keeps them that are his, that they fall not away; on our part, the same God takes care that his elect depart from iniquity. It is not possible they can be totally

and finally deceived, Matth. xxiv. 24, and whom God has chosen he glorifies, Rom. viii. 29, 30. When we are bid make our election sure, it is meant of certainty and assurance as to our knowledge of it, and by no means of God's purpose.

V. The next thing is to shew, that all the elect, and they only, are in time brought out of a state of sin and misery into a state of salvation.

1. All the elect are redeemed by Christ, John x. 15. 'I lay down my life for the sheep,' says he. They are all in due time, by the power of the Spirit, regenerated, converted, and brought to Christ, and get faith to lay hold on him, John vi. 37. 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.' Acts xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' Everlasting love at length breaks forth in bringing them to grace, Jer. xxxi. 3. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' They are all justified, adopted and sanctified, Rom. viii. 30.; and all of them persevere in grace, John xvii. 12. 1 Pet. i. 5. And all this by virtue of their election, Tit. ii. 14.

2. None other but the elect are brought into a state of salvation; none but they are redeemed, sanctified, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, John xvii. 9. Christ prays not for them. Those that perish were never redeemed, nor experienced a saving change passing upon them, as appears from Rom. viii. 29, 30. and 1 John ii. 19. God has passed them by, and suffers them to perish in their sin and guilt.

VI. I come to shew by whom the elect are saved. It is by Christ the Redeemer. Hence the apostle says, Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6. 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' There is no other way of salvation but by him, Acts iv. 12. By him is all grace and glory purchased, and by his satisfaction there is a way opened for the venting of mercy with the good leave of justice. More particularly,

1. Before the elect could be delivered from that state of sin and misery into which they had brought themselves, a valuable satisfaction behoved to be given to the justice of God for the injury done by sin. It is evident from scripture, that God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it. Several things plead strongly for this:

As, (1.) The infinite purity and holiness of God. There is a contrariety in sin to the holiness of his nature, which is his peculiar

glory; and from thence his hatred of it doth arise, which is as essential to him as his love to himself. The infinite purity and rectitude of his nature infers the most perfect abhorrence of whatever is opposite to it. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. v. 4, 5. 'Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' God cannot but hate all the workers of iniquity, and he cannot but punish them. His holiness is not only voluntary, but by necessity of nature. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.

(2.) The justice of God pleads for a valuable satisfaction for sin. And here we are not to consider God as a private person wronged, but as the righteous Judge and Governor of the world, and the sovereign Protector of those sacred laws by which the reasonable creature is to be directed. Now, as it was most reasonable and convenient, that at the first giving of the law he should lay the strongest restraint upon man for preventing sin by the threatening of death; so it was most just and congruous, when the law was broken by man's rebellion, that the penalty should be inflicted either upon the person of the offender, according to the immediate intent of the law, or that satisfaction equivalent to the offence should be made, that the majesty and purity of God might appear in his justice. He is the Judge of all the earth, and cannot but do right.

(3.) The wisdom of God, by which he governs the rational world, admits not of a dispensation or relaxation of the threatening without a valuable satisfaction. For it is as good to have no king as no laws for government, and as good to have no law as no penalty, and as good that no penalty be annexed to the law as no execution of it. Hence, says a learned divine, It is altogether indecent, especially to the wisdom and righteousness of God, that that which provoketh the execution of the law, should procure the abrogation of it, as that should supplant and undermine the law, for the alone prevention of which the law was made. How could it be expected, that men should fear and tremble before God, when they should find themselves more scared and hurt by his threatenings against sin?

(4.) The truth and veracity of God required a satisfaction for sin. The word had gone out of God's mouth, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;' and again it is said, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' Now, this sentence was immutable, and the word that had gone out of his mouth must stand. Had God violated his truth by dispensing with the punishment threatened,

he had rendered himself an unfit object of trust; he had exposed all the promises or threatenings which he should have made after man's impunity, to the mockery and contempt of the offender, and excluded his word from any credit with man for the future. And therefore God's word could not fall to the ground without an accomplishment. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall stand firm. He will be true to his threatenings, though thousands and millions should perish.

2. As satisfaction to justice was necessary, and that which God insisted upon, so the elect could not give it themselves, neither was there any creature in heaven and earth that could do it for them. Heaven and earth were at an infinite loss to find out a ransom for their souls. We may apply to this purpose what we have, Isa. lxiii. 5. 'I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold.' This is the desperate and forlorn condition of the elect by nature as well as others.

3. God pitched upon Christ in his infinite grace and wisdom as the fittest person for managing this grand design. Hence it is said, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty.' And the apostle saith, he 'hath set him forth to be a propitiation for sin.' On this account he is called 'his servant whom he hath chosen, and his elect in whom his soul delighteth.' God speaks to them, as Job xxxiii. 24. 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.'

4. Christ accepted the office of a Redeemer, and engaged to make his soul an offering for sin. He cheerfully undertook this work in that eternal transaction that was between the Father and him. He was content to stand in the elect's room, and to submit himself to the terrible strokes of vindictive justice. He is brought in by the Psalmist offering himself as a Surety in their stead, Psal. xl. 6, 7. 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, &c. Then said I, Lo, I come,' &c. He willingly yielded to all the conditions requisite for the accomplishment of our redemption. He was content to take a body, that he might be capable to suffer. The debt could not be paid, nor the articles of the covenant performed, but in the human nature. He was therefore to have a nature capable of and prepared for sufferings. Hence it is said, Heb. x. 5. 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; but a body hast thou prepared me.' It behoved him to have a body to suffer that which was represented by these legal sacrifices wherein God took no pleasure. And he took a body of flesh, surrounded with the infirmities of our fallen nature, sin only excepted. He condescended to lay aside the robes of his glory, to make himself of no reputation, to take upon him the form of a servant, and be found in the likeness of men.

5. Christ satisfied offended justice in the room of the elect, and purchased eternal redemption for them. 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 8. This was the prime article in the covenant of grace, 'When he shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,' Isa. liii. 10. God required this sacrifice exclusive of all others in the first treaty. 'Sacrifice and burnt-offerings thou wouldst not; in them thou hadst no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come,' &c. These sacrifices were entirely useless for the satisfaction of justice, though fit to prefigure the grand sacrifice that God intended. It was by the death of Christ alone that redemption was purchased for men, Rom. v. 10. Eph. ii. 13. Col. i. 21. And when he was upon the cross, he cried, 'It is finished;' that is, the work of redemption is accomplished; I have done all that was appointed for me to do; the articles on my part are now fulfilled; there remain no more deaths for me to suffer.

Thus the elect are saved by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall conclude all with a few inferences.

1. Behold here the freedom and glory of sovereign grace, which is the sole cause why God did not leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery, as he did the fallen angels. He was no more obliged to the one than the other. Why did he chuse any of the fallen race of men to grace and glory? It was his mere good pleasure to pitch on some, and pass by others. He could have been without them all, without any spot either on his happiness or justice; but out of his mere good pleasure he pitched his love on a select number, in whom he will display the invincible efficacy of his sovereign grace, and thereby bring them to the fruition of glory. This proceeds from his absolute sovereignty. Justice or injustice comes not into consideration here. If he had pleased, he might have made all the objects of his love; and if he had pleased he might have chosen none, but have suffered Adam and all his numerous offspring to sink eternally into the pit of perdition. It was in his supreme power to have left all mankind under the rack of his justice; and, by the same right of dominion, he may pick out some men from the common mass, and lay aside others to bear the punishment of their crimes. There is no cause in the creature but all in God. It must be resolved into his sovereign will. So it is said, Rom. ix. 15, 16. He saith to Moses, 'I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.' And yet God did not will without wisdom. He did not chuse hand over head, and act by mere will without reason and understanding. An infinite wisdom

is far from such a kind of procedure. But the reason of God's proceedings is inscrutable to us, unless we could understand God as well as he understands himself. The rays of his infinite wisdom are too bright and dazzling for our weak and shallow capacities. The apostle acknowledges not only a wisdom in his proceeding, but riches and a treasure of wisdom; and not only that, but a depth and vastness of these riches of wisdom; but was wholly incapable to give a scheme and inventory of it. Hence he cries out, Rom. xi. 33. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Let us humbly adore the divine sovereignty. We should cast ourselves down at God's feet, with a full resignation of ourselves to his sovereign pleasure. This is a more becoming carriage in a Christian, than contentious endeavours to measure God by our line.

2. This doctrine should stop men's murmurings and silence all their pleadings with or against God. O what strivings are there sometimes in the hearts of men about God's absolute sovereignty in electing some and rejecting others? The apostle insists much upon this in Rom. ix. where, having represented the Lord speaking thus by Moses, ver. 15. 'I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion;' he presently prevents an objection, or the strife of man with God about that saying, ver. 19. 'Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?' This is man's plea against the sovereign will of God. But what saith the Lord by the apostle to such a pleader? We have his reproof of him for an answer, in ver. 20. 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?' The apostle brings in this argument as to man's eternal state, He must not strive with God about that. He must not say, Why doth God find fault with man? His absolute power in his reason why he disposeth thus or thus of thee, or any other man. He will give thee no account why it is so; but his own will to have it so. He may chuse some for the glory of his rich, free, and sovereign grace, and leave others to perish in their sins for the glory of his power and justice. This should stop men's mouths, and make them sit down quietly under all God's dealings.

3. This is ground of humility and admiration to the elect of God, and shows them to what they owe the difference that is between them and others, even to free grace. Those who are passed by were as eligible as those that were chosen. Though God hath dignified them, and raised them to be heirs of glory, yet they were heirs of

wrath, and no better than others by nature, Eph. ii. 3. Well may they say with David in another case, 'Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' All were in the same corrupt mass, and nothing but free grace made the difference between the elected and the non-elected.

4. Then the elect shall not persist in their infidelity and natural state, but shall all be effectually called and brought in to Christ. Whatever good things God hath purposed for them shall surely be conferred upon and wrought in them by the irresistible efficacy of his powerful grace. God's counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure.

5. Then people may know that they are elected. Hence is that exhortation, 2 Pet. i. 10. 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Though we cannot break in at the first hand upon the secrets of God, yet if we do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, receive him as our only Saviour, and submit to him as our Lord and Sovereign, we may know that we are elected, seeing the elect and they only are brought to believe. Others may be elected, but they cannot know it till they actually believe.

6. The Lord will never cast off his elect people. He that chose them from eternity, while he saw no good in them, will not afterwards cast them off. God's decree of election is the best security they can have for life and salvation, and a foundation that standeth absolutely sure. Whatever faults and follies they may be guilty of, yet the Lord will never cast them off. They shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

7. *Lastly*, This doctrine may teach us to form our judgment aright concerning the success of the gospel. The gospel and the ministrations thereof are designed for the bringing in of God's chosen ones. All never did nor ever will believe: but one thing is sure, that all who are ordained to eternal life shall believe and obey the gospel, Rom. xi. 7.

OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE*

Psal. lxxxix. 3.—*I have made a covenant with my chosen.*
1 Cor. xv. 45.—*The last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

God made man upright, and entered into a covenant with him, forbidding him to eat of a certain tree in the garden of Eden, on pain of death, natural, spiritual, and eternal, and promising him, in case of continued obedience, life in its utmost extent. But, alas! man being in honour did not continue a night, but foully revolted from the obedience and allegiance he owed to his mighty Creator and bountiful Sovereign. Thus his misery was originally owing to the breaking of the covenant of works; and in that dismal state he and all his descendants had remained for ever, if God, in the wonderful depths of his amazing love and grace, had not from all eternity devised a method of recovery, by entering into a covenant with his own Son as second Adam, head and representative of those destinated by sovereign pleasure to be heirs of salvation. Thus fallen man's recovery, from the first to the last step thereof, is entirely owing to the fulfilling of that covenant entered into betwixt the Father and the Son from eternal ages, and in it the whole mystery of our salvation lies. And this covenant I shall endeavour, through divine assistance, briefly to open up unto you, from the texts now read.

* The transcriber and preparer of the copy of this work for the press thinks it necessary to inform the reader, that Mr. Boston, at three different periods of ministry, preached on *the covenant of grace* from as many different texts. 1. From Cant. iii. 9. 10. 'King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon,' &c. 2. From Isa. xlii. 6, 7. 'I will give thee for a covenant of the people,' &c. 3. From the two texts fronting this discourse. The first of these cannot now be found, after the strictest search among his papers. The two last are preserved; and of both compared together the following discourse is an abridgement. To have inserted either of them entire, would have swelled this work to a size far exceeding the limits proposed. Neither was it at all necessary, as the public has long been in possession of that valuable piece of our author's entitled, *A View of the Covenant of Grace from the Sacred Records*, &c. which he prepared for the press in his lifetime, though it was not published till 1734, two years after his death. In this abridgement there are several references made to that book, where the particulars discoursed of are amplified and more largely illustrated; and to prevent the immoderate extention of this work, of two places, viz. in the promissory part of the covenant and the characters Christ sustains as Administrator thereof, no abridgement is made, but the reader referred to the printed treatise. It is supposed, that the reader, in perusing this part of the work, will consult the treatise itself, at the several places referred to. It is proper also to take notice, that several particulars in this discourse, particularly in the introduction and in the application are not to be found in the said treatise, and are here given *verbatim* from the MSS. without any alteration.

In the verse preceding the first text, there is mention made of a building of mercy, which presupposes miserable ruins, and denotes that this building is intended for the benefit of an elect world ruined by Adam's fall. Free grace and love set on foot this building for them, every stone in which, from the lowest to the highest, is mercy to them: from top to bottom, from the foundation-stone to the top-stone, all is free and rich mercy to them. And the ground of this glorious building is God's covenant with his chosen, *I have made a covenant with my chosen.* In which and the second text four things are to be considered.

1. The foundation on which the building of mercy stands: a covenant, a divine covenant, a sure covenant. The first building for man's happiness, was a building of goodness, bounty, and liberality; but not of mercy, for man was not in misery when it was reared up: it was founded on a covenant too, the covenant of works made with the first Adam. This building soon fell in ruins; for being made with man, liable to change, his foot slipt, the covenant was broken, and the building tumbled down in an instant; there was no more safe dwelling there for Adam or his race, though most of them are still seeking shelter about the ruins of this first building, and will not come to the building of mercy. But this covenant is another, and of a different nature; the covenant of eternal life and salvation for poor sinners, the spiritual seed of the head of the covenant, to be given them in the way of free grace and mercy, and in which they are freed from the curse of the law and the wrath of God. The revelation and offer of this covenant unto the sons of men is called the gospel, announcing the glad tidings of life and salvation to ruined sinners.

2. The parties contractors in this covenant, *I* and *my chosen, the last Adam.* Both heaven and earth were concerned in this covenant; for it was a covenant of peace between them, at variance through sin. And accordingly the interests of both are consulted by the parties contractors.

(1.) On heaven's side is God himself, the party proposer, *I have made a covenant with my chosen.* Though he was the party offended, yet the motion for a covenant comes from him. The Father of Mercies beholding a lost world, his bowels of mercy yearn towards the objects that his sovereign pleasure pitches upon; and that mercy seeks a vent for itself, that it may be shown to the miserable. But justice stands in the way of its egress, unless a method be found to satisfy its claim, in order to pave a passage for the free efflux of mercy. Then saith the Father 'The first covenant will not answer the purpose; another expedient must be fallen upon. The lost

creatures cannot contract for themselves; and if another undertake not for them, they must perish; they cannot chuse an undertaker for themselves. I will chuse one for them, and I will make the covenant with my chosen.'

2. On man's side is God's chosen, or *chosen One*, for the word of God is singular; the son *the last Adam*. Who else as fit to be undertaker on man's side; who else could have been the Father's choice for this vast undertaking? No angel nor man was capable for it but *the mighty One*, ver. 19. whom the Father points out to us as his *chosen*, Isa. xlii. 1.

3. The making of this covenant between the parties, *I have made a covenant with my chosen One*. The Father and the Son made this covenant betwixt them; the bargain was completed by mutual agreement. The terms were on both hands fixed, and the compact closed between them, before the objects of mercy existed; even as the covenant of works betwixt God and the first Adam was made, before we breathed in God's air. And therefore, by the by, ye would take notice, that in reference to covenanting with God, ye pretend not to make a covenant of your own, setting down such and such terms for life and salvation, which you will do. All that remains for us in that matter is to take hold of God's covenant, Isa. lvi. 6. to believe the promise, approve cordially of the covenant, and consent to it for our part as agreed betwixt the Father and the second Adam; so shall ye evidence that ye are of those in whose name Christ stood consenting to the covenant. This is our making of a covenant mentioned, Psal. l. 5.—'that have made a covenant with me by *or* upon a sacrifice,' viz. by laying their hands, by faith, on the head of the sacrifice, thereupon cut down in their stead; and so transferring the guilt ceremonially on the sacrifice; but really and spiritually approving of the device of salvation by a crucified Saviour, and falling in with it as the method of salvation for them.

The original calls it 'cutting of a covenant,' or 'striking a covenant;' being a covenant by sacrifice, confirmed with blood; wherein the party contractor on man's side is both the priest and the sacrifice, the Father's wrath the fire that burnt it, and divine justice the sword that cut it down, Zech. xiii. 7. This is most lively represented, Gen. xv. 9, &c.

Before I go farther in the explication, I will speak a little to this observation, 'That the foundation of all saving mercy to lost sinners is the covenant of grace, the covenant betwixt the Father and the second Adam.' To clear this consider,

1. It is the foundation of the first saving mercy that a poor sinner meets with; and that is the first grace given to the dead soul,

viz. spiritual life, the new heart, the first resurrection, by which the soul is enabled to believe and embrace Jesus Christ, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.' This is saving mercy, Tit. iii. 5. 'According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Upon what bottom can this stone in the building be laid, but on the covenant betwixt the Father and Christ? No doing of the sinner can be pretended here, for life and salvation, since the sinner is really dead spiritually, and can do nothing; but it is a performing of the promise of the covenant to Christ, Eph. ii. 5. 'Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ.'

2. It is the foundation of the middle saving mercies. Look to the soul's actual believing; it is the budding of a promise, a branch of that covenant, Psal. xxii. 29, 31. 'None can keep alive his own soul. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness.' Compare John vi. 37. 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.' Justification is the fruit that grows upon it, Isa. liii. 11. 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' So is Sanctification; they are sanctified in Christ Jesus, in virtue of that covenant, as they were corrupted and defiled in Adam by virtue of the breach of the first covenant, 1 Cor. i. 2. compare Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.' This is an absolute promise with respect to the sinner. All their obedience itself, and persevering in holy obedience, are fruits of the covenant, ver. 27. 'I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them,' Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me;' and so belong to the promise of it, and are no part of the proper condition of it, which must go before partaking of the fruits of it.

3. It is the foundation of the crowning mercy, eternal life in heaven, Tit. i. 2. To whom could this be promised before the world began, but to the Son of God in the eternal compact? So that the sinner comes to be partaker of it in him, as he is of death in Adam, John xvii. 2. 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' Hence notwithstanding all the good works of the saints, wrought all their life long, they receive eternal life as freely, and as much a gift, as if they had nothing, Rom. vi. 21. 'The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Hence they who have done most for God, are as deep in the debt of free grace for their crown,

as the thief on the cross, who believed in Christ and then expired. For all is made over to the several persons of the seed, upon one bottom of the covenant, the proper condition of which was fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

To confirm it, consider,

1. The justice of God could not admit of mercy to lost sinners, but upon the ground of this covenant; whereby the repairing of the honour of the law by obedience and suffering was sufficiently provided for, Psal. xl. 6, 7. The first covenant being broken, the breakers must 'die without mercy,' Heb. x. 28. unless salvation to them be brought about by another covenant, that shall repair the breach; which could be no other but that made with the chosen One.

2. All saving relation betwixt Christ and us is founded on that covenant. Christ obeyed and died; but what benefit have the fallen angels thereby? They were left hopeless for all that, and must encounter with unatoned justice. Why? Not that Christ's doing and dying was not able to save them; the blood of infinite value can have no bounds set to its sufficiency: but because their names were not in that covenant, it had no relation to them, but to lost sinners of Adam's race, Heb. ii. 16.

3. The very design of making that covenant was, that it might be the channel of saving mercy, in which the whole rich flood of it might run, for the quickening, purifying, blessing, fructifying, and perfecting of an elect world, lying under the bands of death and the curse by the breach of the first covenant, Psal. lxxxix. 2. 'Mercy shall be built up for ever;' compared with the text, *I have made a covenant with my chosen.* It was the Father's design; and it was the Son's design, Cant. iii. 10. Men are apt to devise unto themselves other channels of mercy; but this being the only channel designed by infinite wisdom, here the sinful creature will find saving mercy flowing freely, but all other channels he will find quite dry.

4. *Lastly*, It has been the ground of all the saints' expectations and hopes of mercy, in all ages. It was first published in the promise made to Adam, Gen. iii. 15. 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent;' and that was the stay of the souls of the faithful till Abraham's time: then it was more clearly discovered in the promise given to him, Gen. xxii. 18. 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' The ceremonial law, and the prophecies of Christ, pointed out very fully. And thus believers under the Old Testament built their faith of mercy on it. And since that time it has been most clearly and fully discovered in the gospel; and so the New Testament church have raised their faith of mercy on it.

USE I. Behold here the freeness of saving mercy. There is a fountain of mercy opened to sinful creatures; and it was not only provided for them without any merit of theirs, but without so much as any application made by them for it, Rom. xi. 34. A covenant of grace is made betwixt the Father and his own Son as party-contractor on man's side, who doth this for their salvation while they knew nothing about the matter. Here is rich and free grace.

2. It is a vain thing to remain about the ruins of the old building, which stood on the covenant of works, and to expect mercy, life, or salvation there, Gal. ii. 10. 'Man is not justified by the works of the law. It is evident, that man must have mercy now, else he is ruined for ever, without any possible outgate from his misery. If the building of mercy could have been without a new foundation, why was it laid, and laid so deep? But a new foundation was not laid in vain, but because it was necessary that it should be. Therefore expect no mercy in the way of the first covenant. Mount Sinai shews only thunders and lightnings, the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, and the voice of words, which sinners are not able to bear. There is no voice of mercy and grace but from mount Zion.

3. What a wretched disposition in man's nature is it, to be so much addicted to the way of the covenant of works? God saw that there was no hope for fallen man that way; therefore he made a new covenant to build mercy upon. But fallen man will not see it, but still aims to make a shift for himself that way. Our father Adam was well housed indeed in the first building, if he had managed well; but it was by his sin laid in ruins. Yet his sinful children still abide about these ruins, building cottages to themselves of the ruins, seeking righteousness as it were by the work of the law, Rom. ix. 32. and pretending to repair it for themselves. The Jews were never more addicted to the temple, than mankind naturally is to that building on the first covenant. The Jews, after their temple had been laid in ruins, never to be rebuilt, did notwithstanding, in the days of Julian the apostate, attempt to rebuild it; and ceased not, till by an earthquake which shook the old foundation, and turned all down to the ground, and by fire from heaven which burned all their tools, they were forced to forbear. Thus it fares with men with respect to the building on the old covenant; they will never give it over, nor cry for a Mediator in earnest, till mount Sinai, where they work, be all on fire about them. O the mischief of this practice! They thereby affront the wisdom of God, which found out this new way; they despise the grace, free love, and mercy of it; they trample upon the great salvation brought

about by it, Heb. ii. 3. And withal they fight against their own interest; will not enter by the door that is opened for them, but hang about the door that is closed, and shall never be opened to them, and so perish. Thus they 'forsake their own mercy,' Jonah ii. 8.

4. *Lastly*, Quit the old covenant, then, and take hold of the new, that you may be personally entered into it. This you may do by taking hold of Christ, in the way of believing; for he is given for a covenant of the people, Isa. xlii. 6. So the proposal of the covenant is made to you, Isa. lv. 3. And thus shall ye be lodged in the building of saving mercy; and mercy shall be built up to you for ever. But if you do not take hold of this covenant, ye are off the foundation of mercy, and can look for none of it. But to proceed in the explication of our texts:

4. The nature of the covenant made betwixt these glorious parties. Concerning which we may gather from the texts,

(1.) The design of it, viz. *life*, the most valuable interest of mankind. *The last Adam was made a quickening spirit*, viz. to give life, life in perfection, to dead sinners, dead legally, and dead morally.

(2.) The persons for whom this life was designed, the elect, *I have made a covenant with my chosen*. Christ is the head elect, or head of the company chosen to life. In one and the same decree, the Father chose Christ to be the head, and them to be the members. Hence we are said to be 'chosen in him,' Eph. i. 4.

(3.) The representation. As in the first covenant Adam, the party contractor on man's side, was a representative, representing and sustaining the persons of all his natural seed; so in this covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, the party contractor and undertaker on man's side, is a representative, representing and sustaining the persons of all his spiritual seed. This appears from his being designed *the second Adam*, who was a type of him, Rom. v. 14. As the first Adam, representing all his seed in the covenant of works, brought sin and death on them; so Christ, representing all his seed in the covenant of grace, brought righteousness and life to them.

(4.) The condition of the covenant laid on the elect's representative, to be performed by him in their name and stead. He was to be the last Adam, to take upon him man's nature, to clothe himself with our flesh, and therein to go through with what the first Adam had stuck in; that is, to fulfil the covenant, by yielding perfect obedience to it, and suffering the penalty thereof in their room.

(5.) The promise of the covenant, to be performed on that condition by the God of truth. This is implied in these words, *I have made a covenant with my chosen:* i. e. 'I have engaged for such and such benefits, and have bound myself by solemn promise to my cho-

sen, on condition of what I have required of him.' This promise contains whatever is necessary for the complete happiness of the mystical body, grace and glory.

5. *Lastly*, There is one thing more specially to be considered, according to these texts, belonging to the nature of this covenant, viz. that the party contractor on man's side is the administrator of the covenant: *The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.* As Christ was God he could not fail in the performance of his engagement; and therefore God took his single bond for sufficient security; and thereupon he was made administrator of the covenant, Matth. xxviii. 18. He entered on this office at the beginning, and intimated the covenant to fallen Adam in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. and will continue in that office till the last elect soul be brought in. The treasure put into his hand is the promises of the covenant, which are the reward of his own obedience and death, Col. i. 9. Hence he bequeaths all the promised benefits by testament, and lives to be the executor of it. There is a fulness of the Spirit lodged in him, to be communicated to the elect dead in sins; and he is made a life-giving head unto them, John i. 4. Eternal life was lodged in him, 1 John v. 11.; and it is communicated by him, John xvii. 2. as the great trustee and steward of heaven. In the faith of this, Adam called his wife *Life*, or *an Enlivener*, Gen. iii. 20. No wonder he should be called the covenant itself, Isa. xlii. 6. since he is the head of the covenant, unto whom the elect are joined unto God in covenant, the condition of the covenant was performed by him, and the Father has put the promises of the covenant in his hand. This is good news to men, that the promised life is in the hands of the Mediator, who is of our flesh and bone.

The doctrine arising from the two texts, thus compared and explained, is,

Doct. 'The covenant of grace for life and salvation to ruined sinners, was made with Christ the second Adam, and he constituted Administrator thereof.'

In handling this important subject, I shall consider,

I. The parties in the covenant of grace.

II. The parts of it.

III. The administration of it.

IV. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to consider the parties in the covenant of grace. And these are the party contractor on heaven's side, the party contractor on man's side, and the party contracted or undertaken for.

FIRST, Upon the one side is God himself, and God only, as in the covenant of works. As the covenant was made from eternity,

there was no other, and no occasion for any other, to see to the interests of heaven in this transaction. I think that God essentially considered was the party contractor in the person of the Father, Tit. i. 2. Eph. i. 3. Hereby the Son and the Holy Ghost have their part in the covenant on heaven's side, as the party offended; and in the mean time a peculiar agency in this great work is attributed to the Father on that side, as there is unto the Son on man's side. And that we may have some distinct view of God in this character in the covenant of grace, we must consider the following things.

1. God from eternity decreed the creation of man after his own image, and the making of the covenant with him. This whole dispensation was before the Eternal Mind, in all the parts and apurtenances thereof, though, by reason of making that covenant with a creature, it could not actually take place but in time, Acts xv. 18.

2. He also from eternity decreed to permit man to fall, and so to break that covenant, and thereby to involve himself and all his posterity in ruin. This fall he permitted for his own holy ends, purposing to bring about good from it.

3. God is to be considered in this covenant as an offended God, offended with all the sins of all mankind, original and actual. In the first covenant God contracted with man as with a friend, without the interposition of a mediator: but in the second covenant it was not nor could be so; for man is considered in it as a fallen creature, a transgressor of the law, an enemy to God; and it is a covenant of reconciliation and peace, for those who had been at war with heaven.

4. Yet he is to be considered as a God purposing and decreeing from eternity to manifest the glory of his mercy, free love and grace, in the salvation of some of the lost race of Adam, Eph. iii. 10, 11. Without such a purpose of grace in God, there had never been a covenant of grace.

5. Notwithstanding we are to consider him in this matter as a just God, who cannot but do right, give sin a just recompense, and magnify his holy law and make it honourable. Upon the motion, then, of extending mercy to any of mankind, the justice of God interposeth, and pleads that mercy cannot be shewn, but upon terms agreeable to law and justice. And it was not agreeable either to the nature of God, or to his truth in his word, to shew mercy in prejudice of his exact justice, if a throne of grace is to be erected, it must not be set on the ruins of the justice of God. And therefore justice required,

(1.) That the law which was violated be fully satisfied, and the honour thereof repaired, by suffering and obedience, the former

such as may satisfy the sanction of the law and the latter the commanding part thereof. And this the sinners must either do for themselves or another in their room, who can be accepted as sufficient surety.

(2.) That since it was man that sinned, it must be man also who must suffer and obey, that one nature may not sin, and another be put to suffering for it.

Thus lay the impediments in the way of mercy to fallen man, and who could have removed them but God himself? Man could not here have acted for himself; his ability to obey was lost; and ability to suffer what was due to him for sin, so as to exhaust it, and deliver himself, he never had. Angels were not able to bear the burden; their finite natures could not have born so as to bear off infinite wrath. Therefore,

6. *Lastly*, The Father pitches upon his own Son for this work, as one able to make way for mercy over all difficulties, and remove the impediments lying in the way of its egress, Psal. lxxxix. 19. He was able for the work as being the Father's Fellow, Zech. xiii. 7.; his equal, Phil. ii. 6. and so one of infinite power and dignity. And here four things are to be considered.

(1.) The Father designed that his own Son, the eternal Word, should, for this purpose of mercy, take on man's nature, and become man, Heb. x. 5. He saw that sacrifice and offering would not answer the case, that the debt was greater than to be paid so easily, and the work greater than to be managed by a person of less dignity. Wherefore, that the darling attribute of mercy might not for ever remain vailed, he wills that the human nature be united to the divine in the person of his Son.

(2.) He chuseth him to be the head of the election, being one thus in the decree of God raised up from among the people, Psal. lxxxix. 19.; and to be the last Adam, the federal head and representative of such as sovereign pleasure should pitch upon to be vessels of mercy, and enrol in the book of life, that they might have a head who was both God and man, Eph. i. 22.

(2.) He designed a certain number as it were by name to be the constituent members of that body chosen to life, whereof he was the designed head, and gave them to him for that end, Phil. iv. 3. John xvii. 9. They were a chosen company, whom sovereign grace selected from among the rest, on a purpose of love, and gave to Christ, the last Adam, for a seed, John xvii. 6.: therefore they are said to be chosen in him, Eph. i. 4.

(4.) The Father proposed to him, as the last Adam, the conditions and terms of the new covenant, treating with the elect in him

as with all mankind in the first covenant. Now, he has found one who is able to answer for the lost company, and treats with him in their name, for life and salvation to them, in a suitableness to the honour of law and justice.

Inf. 1. The redemption of the soul is precious. The salvation of sinners was a work greater than the making of the world. The powerful Word commanded, and the last was done: but much more was to be done ere a sinner could be saved from wrath.

2. Think not that Christ is more willing to save you than the Father is. The will of Christ, his Father, and Spirit, are one. And one person of the glorious Trinity cannot be less willing to help poor sinners than another is. Which should incite and encourage you to come to God by Christ.

3. Behold the matchless love of the Father to lost sinners of Adam's race, 1 John iii. 1. The whole contrivance sprung from his free grace, shewing itself in greatest measure and exceeding riches of grace, Eph. ii. 7. Man lay in the utmost misery before him: a most miserable creature, needing help, but making no application to him for it, Rom. xi. 34.; a sinful creature, having nothing in him to provoke to liking, but loathing; a criminal, upon whom justice demanded vengeance; one whose debt no creature was able to undertake for; therefore he gave his own Son, a gift in grace without a parallel.

SECONDLY, Upon the other side is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with the elect, his spiritual seed, Heb. ii. 13.; the former as the party-contractor and undertaker, the latter as the party contracted and undertaken for; which is a good reason for his name *Immanuel*, Matth. i. 23. The party-contractor then in this covenant with God is our Lord Jesus Christ. He managed the interests of men in this eternal bargain, and there were none of that party with him to help him, nor capable to do it. And he acted in a twofold capacity towards the making of this covenant, as the eternal Word, and the second Adam.

First, As the eternal Word, having no nearer relation to man than as his Creator, and sovereign Lord, John i. 1, 2, 3. Our Lord Jesus Christ is now our near kinsman, the elder brother of the family of mankind, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; but from the beginning it was not so. He was from eternity the only begotten Son of God, and by voluntary dispensation only, for the relief of fallen man he became man, and so was allied to the house of Adam. Here let us consider what our Lord Jesus did as the eternal Word in this covenant, viz. his consenting to it, and the effect of that consent.

1. Let us consider what our Lord did as the eternal Word in making of this covenant. He consented to the proposals made by his Father, in order to the erecting of a new covenant with lost sinners of Adam's race. God saw there was a necessity of a new bargain for the salvation of any of them; that the old covenant would not answer his purpose of mercy; and that this covenant could not be made unless his own Son became the head of it. Hereto the Son of God, for the glory of his Father, and the salvation of sinners, readily agreed; and gave his consent.

1*st*, That he should become man, by taking into a personal union with himself a holy human nature, according to the eternal destination of his Father, Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. He consents to be incarnate, that all flesh might not perish; which was accordingly fulfilled in time, John i. 14. The two families of heaven and earth were at war, and no peace could take place betwixt them but through a Mediator. And where could a fit Mediator be found, a day's-man meet to interpose betwixt such parties, who would not either be too high or too low, in respect of one of the parties at variance? Man or angel would have been too low in respect of God; and an unvailed God would have been too high in respect of sinful man. Wherefore the Son of God, that he might be a fit Mediator betwixt the parties, as he was by his eternal generation high enough, in respect of God, so he consents to become low enough in respect of man, by a temporal generation of a woman.

2*dly*, That he should be a second Adam, a head and representative of the chosen company, sustaining their persons, and acting in their name, Psal. xl. 6, 7. 'Mine ears hast thou opened,' or 'bored,' as Exod. xxi. 6; thereby intimating his consent to be the Father's servant for ever, in the work of man's salvation. It was evident the breach betwixt God and man was greater than to be taken away by a mere intermessenger, which should go betwixt the parties, and so reconcile them with bare words. There could not be a covenant of peace betwixt God and sinners, without a reparation of damages done to the honour of God, and without honouring his holy law by an exact obedience as his subjects: and both of these were quite beyond their reach. The Son of God, beholding the strait sinners were brought to, while they could neither do for themselves, nor any in all the creation could afford them help, saith, 'Lo, I come;' I am content to take their place, and put myself in their room, as a second Adam.

Thus was the foundation of the covenant laid, by the Father's proposal, and the consent of his Son thereto, as the eternal Word.

2. Let us consider the effect of this consent of the eternal Word.

He was thereby constituted Mediator betwixt God and man, as God-man in one person, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Having had the Father's call thereto, and that call being accepted by his own consent, he was thereby established the great Mediator betwixt God and man, for making and keeping the designed peace between heaven and earth; through whom, and in whom, as a public person, God might enter into a new covenant with sinners of Adam's race. Thus also was he constituted the second Adam, and representative of all the elect, with whom the Father might treat as one answering for them. And was constituted Mediator or Midsman betwixt God and sinners in two respects.

1*st*, He was constituted Mediator in respect of his natures. He was a substantial Mediator, as partaking of the nature of both parties. He was God equal with the Father from all eternity, and so stood related to heaven: he was designed to be man from eternity, and so stood related to earth. In this divine constitution four things are to be considered.

(1.) That he should be a real man, having a true body, and a reasonable soul, and not be so in appearance only, Heb. ii. 14. that so he might be capable to suffer, since without shedding of blood was no remission; and the divine nature could not suffer.

(3.) That that body of his should not be made of nothing, nor of any thing but what belongs to Adam's family, Psal. lxxxix. 19. Gal. iv. 4.; that so he might indeed be one of the family of Adam, Luke iii. ult.; a brother of those in whose name he was to act, Heb. ii. 11. and so the same nature that sinned might suffer.

(4.) That that human nature should be united to his divine nature in the way of a personal union, John i. 4; the divine nature in the person of the Son marrying the human nature to itself, that the Son of God should become as really the Son of man, and of Adam's family, as he was the Son of God, and of the family of heaven. And this to the end that what he might do or suffer in the name of his brethren, might be of infinite value and efficacy, as the deed of a divine person, Acts xx. 28. 1 John i. 7.

(4.) That that human nature to be thus united to the divine in the person of the Son, should be a holy thing; since sinful flesh was not capable of an immediate union with God; and that therefore, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, that substance of the body that was to be prepared for the Mediator, should be separated from all corruption and infection from the first Adam; and the soul and body should both be of a perfectly holy nature, Luke i. 35. This was necessary to qualify him to be Mediator, the last Adam; for had he himself been defiled with the least taint of sin, he could not have expiated the sins of others, Heb. vii. 26, 27.

2dly, As by his consent to become man, he was constituted substantial Mediator; so by his consent to become last (or second) Adam, he was constituted official Mediator betwixt God and man, or Mediator in respect of office, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. He had his Father's call to the office, Heb. v. 4.; and having consented to and embraced the call, he was invested in the office, and treated with as such from all eternity, Prov. viii. 22, 23.

Now was there one provided to take the desperate cause of lost sinners in hand: a glorious and a mighty One, with whom the new covenant of grace might be made, with safety to the Father's honour and the case of perishing sinners: A fit hand, as partaking of both natures, and invested with that office, which he and only he was fit for. And this brings me to the second capacity wherein he acted in this matter. Then he acted,

Secondly, As the second Adam, head and representative of the election, by the Father's destination and his own consent. What he did as the Eternal Word, made way for the covenant, and was, as it were, the preliminaries of the covenant: but it was in this capacity that the covenant was formally made with him, as appears from our texts already explained.

Now Christ standing in that capacity, as second Adam, head of the election, did two things, whereby he entered actually into the covenant with his Father.

1. He accepted the gift of the particular persons elected by name, from all eternity, by his Father, made to him. Heb. ii. 13.; and in token thereof owns them in particular as his brethren, ver. 11. Like as the first Adam, in the making of the first covenant, stood alone without actual issue; yet had destinated for him a numerous issue, even all mankind, who should with him be comprehended in the same covenant; which Adam, virtually at least, accepted: so God having chosen a certain number of lost mankind, he, as their original proprietor, gives them to Christ, the appointed head, to be his members, and comprehended with him in the second covenant, though as yet none of them had a being; and he accepts the gift of them, is well pleased to take these in particular for his body mystical, for which he should engage in covenant to his Father, John xvii. 6. 10.

2. Christ did in the name and stead of these particular persons elected unto life, and given unto him, consent unto the conditions and terms of the covenant, proposed by the Father for life and salvation to them. And thus the covenant was concluded, Psal. xl. 6, 7. 8. Isa. liii. 10. As the first Adam, representing all his natural seed, did in their name and stead consent to the terms and condi-

tions of the first covenant, and so entered into that covenant for them; so the second Adam representing all his spiritual seed, did as a public person, in their name, consent to the terms of the second covenant. And as he had in the eternal decree taken on him their nature, so he did from all eternity put on their person, answer to their names as being in law one person with them, even as the cautioner is with the principal debtor, and the husband with the wife in case of debt, who are one in the eye of the law; and, having heard all the demands of law and justice upon them, he struck hands with the Father, to satisfy all these demands to the utmost.

For clearing of this purpose I shall shew,

1. That the second covenant was made with Christ, as the last Adam, head and representative of the elect.

2. Why it was made so with him.

First, I am to shew, that the second covenant was made with Christ, as the last Adam, head and representative of the elect. Consider,

1. Covenants typical of the covenant of grace were made with persons representing their seed. The covenant of royalty, a type of this covenant, was made with David, as representative of his seed; therefore the covenant of grace typified by it was made with Christ, as the representative of his seed. Hence in our first text the party covenanted with and sworn to is called *David*, which is one of the names of Christ typified by David, Hos. iii. ult. for which cause the mercies of the covenant are called 'the sure mercies of David,' Isa. lv. 3. And this David is God's servant having a seed comprehended with him in the covenant, Psal. lxxxix. 4. To the same purpose it may be observed, that Phinehas' covenant of priesthood was a type of the covenant of grace; and in it Phinehas stood as representative of his seed, typifying Jesus Christ representing his spiritual seed in the covenant of grace, Numb. xxv. 12, 13. This is evident from Psal. cx. 4. where the everlasting priesthood promised to Phinehas has had its full accomplishment in Jesus Christ. Hereto may be added, that the covenant made with Noah and his sons was made with them as the heads of the new world, and representatives of their seed, Gen. ix. 9, 11. And that this covenant was a type of the covenant of grace, and Noah therein a type of Christ, is clear from its being established on a sacrifice, Gen viii. 20, 21.; from the nature of that covenant, viz. that there should not be another deluge, chap. ix. 11.; typical of the wrath of God against the elect, Isa. liv. 9, 10. confirmed by the rainbow about the throne, Rev. iv. 3. Wherefore, since in the covenant of royalty, by which the covenant of grace is typified in our text, and in other covenants

typical thereof, the parties with whom they were made stood as heads, public persons and representatives of their seed, it is evident, that the covenant of grace typified by these was made with Christ as the head and representative of his spiritual seed: for whatever is attributed to any person or thing as a type, hath its accomplishment really and chiefly in the person or thing typified.

2. This appears also from his being the last Adam, as he is called in the second text; the reason of which must be taken, not from the nature common to the first and last Adam, for all mankind partake of that; but from their common office of federal headship and representation, in the respective covenants touching man's eternal happiness, which is peculiar unto Adam and the man Christ. Accordingly Adam is called 'the first man,' and Christ 'the second man,' 1 Cor. xv. 47. But Christ is no otherwise the second man, than he is the second federal head or representative in the second covenant, as Adam was the first federal head and representative in the first. Wherefore, as the first covenant was made with Adam, as the head and representative of all mankind, the second covenant was made with Christ, as the head and representative of all the elect.

3. The promises of the covenant were made to Christ, as the second Adam, head and representative of the elect, Gal. iii. 16. 'Unto Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith,—And to thy seed, which is Christ.' I own that here is meant Christ mystical, the head and members: To them the promises are made, but primarily to the head, secondarily to the members in him; even as the promise of life was made in the first covenant to Adam, and to all his natural seed in him. And so the promise plainly stands, Isa. liii. 10, 11. 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.' Thus the covenant is said to be made with the house of Israel, the spiritual Israel, yet is directed, not to them, but to another person, Heb. viii. 10.; the reason of which plainly appears in the promises being made to Christ, as their head and representative. Now, if the promises being made to Christ, as the head and representative of the elect, the covenant was made with him as such; for it is the covenant to which the promises belong, Eph. ii. 12.; and he to whom they were primarily made, was no doubt the party contractor.

4. This federal headship of Christ, and his representing of the elect in the covenant of grace, is evident from his suretyship in that

covenant, whereby he became Surety for them, Heb. vii. 22. Now, he was Surety for them in the way of satisfaction for their debt, and the punishment due to them; and that as for persons utterly unable to answer for themselves, so that he took the whole upon himself. Now, such a surety is a true representative of the parties he is Surety for, one person with them in the eye of the law. Hence not only is Christ said to have been 'made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21. to have had 'our sins laid upon him,' Isa. liii. 6. to have 'died in our room and stead,' 1 Tim. ii. 6. Rom. v. 6; but also we are said to have been 'crucified with him,' Gal. ii. 20.; to be 'made the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor. v. 21.; yea, to 'be raised up' and glorified 'in him,' Eph. ii. 6.; and to be 'made alive in him,' as we 'died in Adam,' 1 Cor. xv. 22. All which necessarily requires this headship and representation of his in the covenant.

5. Christ bears the name of the elect, being called by their name, even as they are by his; a plain evidence of their being one in the eye of the law, and God treating with Christ as their representative in the covenant. The elect are called *Israel*, viz. the spiritual Israel, Rom. ix. 6; and so is our Lord Jesus Christ, Isa. xlix. 3. Heb. 'Thou art my servant: Israel, in whom I will glorify myself.' This is plainly meant of Christ, ver. 6; and the sense is, Thou art Israel representative, in whom I will glorify myself, as I was dishonoured by Israel, the collective body of the elect. And this may give light into that passage, Psal. xxiv. 6. compare ver. 7. &c. Thus the first man was called *Adam*, or *man*, as being the head and representative of all mankind, the person in whom God treated with the whole kind. Accordingly the elect are comprehended under the name of *Christ*, Gal. iii. 16. Col. i. 24; as all men are under the name of *Adam*, Psal. xxxi. 5. 11. 'Verily every man (*Heb.* all Adam) is vanity.'

Secondly, I come to shew why the second covenant was made with Christ as a representative, the last Adam.

1. That infinite love might have an early vent, even from eternity. God's eternal love to his elect vented itself in the covenant of grace, which is an everlasting or eternal covenant, Heb. xiii. 20. Hence we find that covenant and that love of the same eternal date, Isa. lv. 3. 'I will make with you an everlasting covenant, *Heb.* a covenant of eternity.' Jer. xxxi. 3. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, *Heb.* a love of eternity.' But since the elect are but of yesterday, the covenant of grace behoved to be like the covenant of works, but a yesterday's covenant, a time-covenant, if it was not made with Christ as their representative; it could not have been an eternal covenant otherwise; the promise of eternal life,

which is undoubtedly a promise of that covenant, could not otherwise have been of so ancient a date, as the apostle says it was. Tit. i. 2. 'before the world began.'—And how could an eternal covenant be made with time-creatures orlginally, but in their eternal head and representative? Or how could an eternal covenant be made personally with them, by way of personal application to them, had it not been from eternity made with another as their head and representative?

2. Because otherwise it could not have been made a conditional covenant at all, to answer the design of it. This covenant took place on the breach of the first covenant; and it is a covenant of life, Mal. ii. 5. life to dead sinners; *the last Adam being made a quickening spirit.* It was the great design of it, that dead sinners might have life, Tit. i. 2. Now, in order to this, a holy just God stood upon conditions, without the performing of which that life was not to be given; and they were high conditions, Psal. xl. 6. 1 Thess. v. 10. Now, how could an effectual conditional covenant for life be made with dead sinners, otherwise than in a representative? Can dead souls perform any condition for life pleasing to God? They must have life before they can do any thing, if it were ever so small a condition. Therefore a conditional covenant for life could not be made with sinners in their own persons; especially considering that the conditions were so high for life to the sinner, that man at his best state was not able for them, far less in his sinful state. Therefore, if such a covenant was made at all, it behoved to be made with Christ as the sinner's representative, Rom. viii. 3, 4.

3. That it might be a covenant of grace indeed, and not a covenant of works, to sinners themselves. It is evident, that the design of this covenant was to exalt free grace, and that it is framed so as to be a covenant of pure grace, and not of works to us, whatever it was to Christ, Rom. iv. 16. Eph. ii. 9. And thus indeed it is a covenant of pure grace, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as representative, being the sole undertaker for, and performer of all the conditions of the covenant in the sinner's name; whereby all ground of boasting is taken from the creature. But this is marred upon the supposition of the covenant being made with the sinner in and by himself, standing as principal party contracting with God, undertaking and performing the condition of the covenant for life: for how low soever these conditions undertaken and wrought by the sinner himself be, the promise of the covenant is made to them, and so, according to the scripture, it is a covenant of works, Rom. iv. 4, 5. And there is no difference between Adam's covenant and such a covenant, but in degree, which alters not the kind of covenant.

4. That the communication of righteousness and life to sinners might be in as compendious a way as the communication of death and sin was, Rom. v. 19. God having made the covenant of works with Adam as the representative of his seed, sin and death was communicated to them all from him as a deadly head, having broken the covenant. This being so, it was not agreeable to the method of divine procedure, to treat with every one to be saved, by themselves as principal parties in the new covenant for life; but with one public person for them all, who should be, by his fulfilling the covenant, a quickening head to them, from whom life might be derived unto them, in as compendious a way as death from the first Adam. This was most agreeable to the way of him whose mercy is above all his other works.

5. That it might be a sure covenant, as entered into with a sure hand, Rom. iv. 16. The first covenant was made with a mere creature as principal party and contractor; and though he was a holy and righteous creature, yet he was so unstable in performing the condition laid on him, that the promise was lost. Wherefore the fallen creature was not fit to be the principal party, or party contractor in the new covenant, wherein the promises were to be sure to poor sinners, and not to misgive. Therefore the Lord seeing them all a broken company, not to be trusted in this matter, he proposes to his own Son to be head of the new covenant, and therein to act for and in name of those given him for a seed; which being accepted, the business is made sure. God looked only to him for the performance of the condition, and the promises were made to him, and so are sure to all the seed, Gal. iii. 16. Compare Psal. lxxxix. 28. 'My mercy will I keep for him, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.'

Inf. 1. What a spring of unspeakable comfort is it to believers, to look back into eternity, before the world was made, and to behold the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, standing as the last Adam, contracting with God in the second covenant! This may move them to cry, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Rom. xi. 33. and to shout, Grace, grace to the glorious contrivance, so full of grace. Here they may see,

1. The covenant on which their salvation depends made with a near relation of theirs, even as was the first covenant by the breaking of which they were ruined. In the one stood the first Adam for them, in the other the second Adam. Why should they look as strangers towards the covenant of grace? The party contracting in it with God is their near kinsman, their elder brother, flesh of

their flesh, and bone of their bone, Eph. v. 30.; nay, their Father, who is nearer to and has a more natural concern in them than a brother; even the second Adam, who is their second Father; in respect of which I think he is called 'the everlasting Father,' Isa. ix. 6. compare Heb. ii. 13.

2. Their nature highly dignified; the human nature, however corrupt it is in the multitude that partake of it, yet pure and spotless in the second Adam, fit to enter into a new covenant with an offended God. Man's nature, as it was defiled by Adam, became so abominable, that it could never again appear before God immediately to covenant with him; but in Christ it is so perfectly pure, that it was capable of an immediate union with the Godhead in his person, and so of covenanting with him immediately.

3. The covenant so stable and firm, that it cannot be broken, the Son of God himself, being the second Adam, contractor in this covenant. The first Adam being a mere creature, not confirmed, his covenant was liable to breaking, he was capable of failing, and did fail, in the performance of the condition: and so are all the covenants made with God upon conditions to be performed by sinful men: but in regard of the party-contractor, viz. the Lord Jesus, the covenant of grace is an everlasting covenant, it cannot be broken, Isa. lv. 3. Psal. lxxxix. 30,—33, 34.

4. The covenant well-ordered in all things, as for the honour of God, so for their good in time and eternity. The second Adam, manager for them, was the Son of God, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; he managed for his own family, his own children: so there was neither affection nor wisdom wanting in him. We may be sure then there is nothing in the covenant that their good would have required to have been kept out; and nothing out that their case required to be in. What remains then, but that by believing they approve of the covenant, and take the comfort of it?

Inf. 2. The covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace are not two distinct covenants, but one and the same covenant. I know some great and good men have taught otherwise, alleging the covenant of redemption to have been made with Christ, and the covenant of grace to be made with believers; though they were far from designing or approving the ill use some have made of that principle. However, the doctrine of this church, in the Larger Catechism, is in express words, 'The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed.' From whence it necessarily follows, that the covenant made with Christ and with believers, or the covenant of grace and redemption, are

one and the same covenant. Only, in respect of Christ, it is called *the covenant of redemption*, forasmuch as in it he engaged to pay the price of our redemption; but in respect of us, *the covenant of grace*, forasmuch as the whole of it is of free grace to us, God himself having provided the ransom, and thereupon made over life and salvation to poor sinners, his chosen by free promise, without respect to any work of theirs to entitle them thereto *.

Inf. 3. As all mankind sinned in Adam, so believers obeyed and suffered in Christ the second Adam. For as the covenant of works being made with Adam as a public person and representative, when he broke the covenant, all sinned in him; so the covenant of grace being made with Christ as a public person and representative, all believers obeyed and suffered in him, when he fulfilled the covenant, Rom. viii. 3, 4. Gal. ii. 20.

Inf. 4. Believers are justified immediately by the righteousness of Christ, without any righteousness of their own intervening, as all men are condemned from their birth upon the sin of Adam, before they have done good or evil in their own persons. So that they are righteous before God with the self-same righteousness, which was wrought by Christ in the fulfilling of this covenant; which righteousness is imputed to them, not in its effects only, so as their faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, are accepted as their evangelical righteousness, on which they are justified; but in itself. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified; and faith, repentance, and new obedience, considered as conditions performed, are works and cannot found a title to justification.

Inf. 5. The covenant of grace is absolute, and not conditional to us. For being made with Christ as representative of his seed, all the conditions of it were laid on him, and he has fulfilled the same. So what remains of the covenant to be accomplished is only the fulfilling of the promises to him and his spiritual seed; even as it would have been with the first Adam's seed, if once he had fulfilled the condition of the covenant.

Inf. 6. The way to attain to the enjoyment of all the benefits of the covenant of grace, is to unite with Christ the head of the covenant by faith. Being thus ingrafted into him, ye shall partake of that happiness secured to mystical Christ in the everlasting covenant; even as by your becoming sons of Adam by your natural generation, ye fall under that sin and death which passeth on all by the breaking of the first covenant, Rom. v. 12.

* The illustration of this point may be seen in the Author's *View of the Covenant of Grace*, under the title, *Of the party-contractor on man's side* inf. 1. a work posterior to this discourse.

Inf. 7. The offer of Christ made to you in the gospel, is the offer of the covenant of grace to you, and of all the benefits thereof; and the embracing of Christ is the embracing of the covenant, and the personal entering into it. The covenant of grace held forth in the gospel, is the cord of love let down from heaven to perishing sinners shipwrecked in Adam, to save them from sinking into the bottom of the gulf, and to hale them to land. It is their duty to lay hold of the covenant by faith, Isa. lvi. 4, 6. And that is done by taking hold of Christ in the free promise, believing that he is held forth to you in particular, confiding and trusting in him for your salvation from sin and wrath, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in the promise, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life,' John iii. 16. For he is given for a covenant to you, Isa. xlix. 8. and xlii. 6. So receiving him you receive the covenant, he being the head of the covenant, who performed the condition, and to whom the promises were made.

Inf. 8. The covenant of grace is a contrivance of infinite wisdom and love, worthy to be embraced by poor sinners with all joy, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. O admirable contrivance of help for a desperate case! wonderful contrivance of a covenant with them who were incapable of coming into the presence of a holy just God, or to perform the least condition for life and salvation! A new bargain for life and salvation to lost sinners, on the highest terms, made with those who were incapable to come up to the lowest terms! Wisdom found out the way, viz. by a representative: the love of the Father engaged him to make the proposal; and the love of the Son induced him to accept it. Thus a sure covenant is made, and a firm foundation laid, on which the sinner may safely lay his whole weight, for upon it lies the weight of God's honour, Isa. xxviii. 16.

Inf. last, How sinful and dangerous must the course of those be who practically corrupt the covenant of grace, pretending to make a covenant with God, as parties contractors and undertakers, for life and salvation, instead of taking hold of God's covenant; the carnal Jews did so corrupt it, looking for life and salvation, not for the sake of the promised seed alone, but for their obedience to the ceremonial and moral law: and thus do many to this day practically corrupt it. They think the covenant of grace is a promise of life and salvation upon condition of faith, repentance, and sincere obedience to the law: whereupon they consent to these terms, and solemnly undertake to perform them, and then, upon their (fancied) performance of them, they challenge life and salvation, as having done their part. This quite overturns the nature of the covenant of grace, Rom. iv. 4. and xi. 6. The sinfulness of it is great, as over-

looking Christ, the great undertaker and party contractor by the appointment of the Father; and putting themselves in his room, to act, and do, and work for themselves for life. And the danger of it must be great, as laying a foundation to bear the weight of their souls, which divine wisdom saw to be quite unable to bear it, Gal. v. 4. So the issue of such covenanting must be, that the covenanters shall lie down in sorrow. The true way of covenanting is, to take up the covenant of grace as a free promise of life and salvation, upon condition of Christ's obedience and death performed already; to believe that promise with particular application to the sinner himself, *i. e.* that the sinner believe, that he shall have life and salvation, pardon of sin, repentance, sanctification, grace, and glory, and that upon the ground of Christ's obedience and satisfaction only, Heb. viii. 10. Thus the covenant is held out, as a free and absolute promise, to sinners indefinitely, like a rope to a company of drowning men, that whoever believes it may by it be drawn forth out of the waters. We proceed to consider,

THIRDLY, The party contracted and undertaken for in this covenant. And as the party-contractor was a representative, so the party-contracted for was represented by him. And that these two, the represented and the contracted for, are of equal latitude, is plain from the nature of the thing: for those whom one represents in a covenant, he contracts for in that covenant; and those for whom one contracts in a covenant, made with him as a representative, they are represented by him in that covenant. It is evident also from the relation betwixt the two Adams, the former being a type of the latter. In the first covenant, those whom Adam contracted for, he represented; and those whom he represented, he contracted for: therefore those whom the second Adam contracted for he represented; and whom he represented, he contracted for.

Now, the party represented and contracted for in the covenant of grace by our Lord Jesus Christ, was the elect of mankind; a certain number of the posterity of Adam chosen from eternity to everlasting life, Heb. ii. 11, 12, 13. In their person it was that he stood in making this bargain with his Father, in their name it was that he acted when he struck hands with the Father, as a surety to obey the law, and satisfy justice. And that these only could be so represented by him in this covenant, as being the objects of election, is evident from the last discourse, on the doctrine of election.

It will be proper, therefore, to shew how the elect were considered in this covenant and federal representation. They come under a threefold consideration, as sinners, as impotent sinners, and as objects of the divine love.

1. As sinners ruined in Adam, lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matth. xv. 24. In the first covenant God put all the flock of mankind under the hand of one shepherd, Adam. But he lost all the flock, and was never able to recover them again. God from all eternity had put a secret mark on some of them, whereby he distinguished them from the rest, 2 Tim. ii. 19. He saw them among the rest, gone from their pasture, wandering like poor waifs and strays, a prey to every devourer. And he proposeth a new covenant, whereby they might be put under the hand of Christ as their shepherd, to be by him sought out and brought back. And this our Lord Jesus accepted, though he well knew what it would cost him to save the lost sheep.

2. As impotent, and utterly unable to help themselves, in whole or in part, Rom. v. 6. They were debtors, and utterly unable to pay one farthing of their debt; and criminals, and quite unable to bear their own punishment to the satisfaction of justice. Had it lain on them to have paid the debt or borne the punishment, they behoved for ever to have sunk under the load. Then said the Son of God, 'I cannot see them perish; Father, I put myself in their room, I will answer for them; I will pay their debt, and bear their punishment; I will be the debtor and criminal in law reckoning, as representing the criminals and debtors.' The representation is sustained, the payment of all is laid on him, and is looked for from no other hand, in whole or in part, either by the one or other party contracting, Isa. lxiii. 3. Psal. lxix. 4. Yet,

3. As objects of eternal love, sovereign and free, given to Christ by his Father. The Father loved them, John xvii. 23. and therefore gave them to Christ, ver. 6. The Son loved them, Eph. v. 2. and accepts of the gift, and represents them in the covenant, as a Father does his children, Isa. ix. 6. with Heb. ii. 13. This absolutely free love, and mere good pleasure, was the reason why they, and not others in the same condemnation by the breach of the first covenant, were represented by Christ in the second covenant; why their names were put in the eternal contract, when the names of others were left out, Luke x. 21. They were his Father's choice and his choice; and so he became their representative*.

II. The second general head is to consider the parts of this covenant. These are the things agreed upon betwixt God and Christ, as the second Adam, and representative of the elect in the covenant.

* Some proper inferences relative to this part of the subject may be seen on the treatise on the covenant of grace, under the title, *Of the party contracted and undertaken for.*

They may be taken up in two things, the condition of the covenant, and the promises thereof. I shall consider each distinctly.

FIRST, The condition of the covenant. The condition of a covenant or bargain is that part of it, upon the performance of which one's right to the benefit promised is founded, his plea for it is established, as becoming due to him for his performance, according to the agreement betwixt the parties. For instance, the paying of such a sum of money, for such a commodity, according to the agreement of the parties bargaining, is the condition of a covenant of commerce, sale, or traffic; and the working of such a piece of work, or doing of such a deed, for such a reward, agreed upon by the parties, is the condition of a covenant of service or hire.

There is also what is called a condition of connection or order in a covenant, whereby one thing necessarily goes before another in the order of a covenant, without being the ground on which one's right and title to that other thing is founded. As in the former instances, the buyer's receiving of the commodity, and the hireling's receiving of the reward, covenanted or bargained for, must needs go before the possession or enjoyment of them: but it is evident, that receiving is not the thing on which the buyer's right and title to the reward is founded: therefore, though it may be called a condition of connection in the respective covenants, yet it connot in any propriety of speech be called the condition of these covenants.

Thus in the order of the covenant of grace, the having of the Spirit must go before faith, faith before justification, justification before sanctification, and holiness before heaven's happiness. These may be called conditions in the covenant of grace, viz. conditions of certain connection; and belong to the established order of the promises of the covenant, which are contradistinguished to the condition of the covenant. But such conditions can in no proper sense be called the condition or conditions of the covenant.

This being premised, we say, that the condition of the covenant of grace, properly so called, is Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, owing unto God by the elect, in virtue of the covenant of works, and that as the last Adam, their head and representative. And here I shall,

1, Evince this to be the condition of the covenant.

2. Explain and unfold that righteousness, the fulfilling whereof was made the condition of the covenant.

FIRST, I am to evince that this is the condition of the covenant of grace. This will appear, if ye consider,

1. Christ's fulfilling all righteousness in the second Adam, is what the Father proposed unto Christ as the terms of the elect's

salvation, and upon which he founded his promise of eternal life to them; and not any work or deed of theirs, Isa. liii. 10, 11. And says Christ, *This cup is the new testament in my blood;* as if he had said, All the promises of the covenant were written with my blood, it was the condition which procured them, and without which ye had never obtained them. And accordingly this is what Christ, as the second Adam, did from eternity consent to, undertake, and bind himself for, and in time did perform, Matth. iii. 15. 'It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,' as it becomes a person of honour and credit to fulfil his bargain. Luke xxiv. 26. 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?' viz. as one ought to perform the condition of a covenant or bargain he has agreed to.

Object. But the elect's believing, holiness, and good works, were also fixed as terms of their salvation: and Christ undertook also that they should believe, &c.

Ans. Then at that rate Christ performed the chief part of the condition of the covenant, and took it wholly on himself; but they perform another part of the condition, for which he became their cautioner. Thus the condition of the covenant of grace is divided betwixt Christ and the impotent beggarly creature: and so must the glory of their salvation be; for whosoever works part of the work, or pays a part of the price, without question so much of the reward and purchase is due to him. But none of the glory of it is due to us, 1 Cor. i. 31. Zech. vi. 13. Rom. iv. 4, 5.; and therefore no part of the condition is performed by us. I own these things are secured in the covenant; but they are secured not in the conditionary part of the covenant, but in the promissory part of it, Heb. viii. 10.

2. This, and nothing done by the sinner himself, is that upon which a sinner's right to eternal life is founded: upon nothing else can he safely found his plea before the Lord for life and salvation. And a sinner thoroughly convinced will find it so, Rom. iii. 24, 25. Eph. i. 7. Phil. iii. 9. The sinner standing trembling in the court of conscience, by faith gets under the covert of the Mediator's righteousness, and dare oppose nothing to the sentence of the law, but Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, giving up all other pleas for life and salvation. And believing is the pleading itself upon that ground, not the ground of the plea. It saith, 'My Lord and my God,' in the promise, upon the ground of Christ's fulfilling all righteousness only, as the condition of the covenant.

3. This is that alone by which the salvation of sinners becomes due or a debt. Now, it is not a debt to them; therefore they fulfil no part of the condition: but unto Christ; therefore he performed

the proper condition of the covenant; for he who fulfils the condition of a covenant, the reward is of debt to him, Rom. iv. 4, 5. compare 1 John ii. 1. 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. We may see this even in the first Adam's covenant, the condition whereof was perfect active obedience. Which if it had been fulfilled by Adam, eternal life to him and his would thereupon have become due or a debt to him. And hence it is, that Christ's fulfilling all righteousness is the believer's only plea for life and salvation: even as in case Adam had performed the condition of his covenant, the plea of all his posterity for life would have been founded on that performance solely, as being the only obedience that was the condition of that covenant; their personal obedience, at least after the performance of the former, being the accomplishment of the promise of the covenant, not of the condition. And so they would have had life, not for any personal deed or work of theirs, but freely, for the obedience of the first Adam, to which he did graciously make the promise of life in the first covenant.

4. *Lastly*, The covenant of grace doth so exclude our boasting as the covenant of works did not, Rom. iii. 27. But if any deed or work of our own be the condition of the covenant of grace in whole or in part, our boasting is not excluded; for life and salvation is of or by the fulfilling of the condition of the covenant, Rom. iv. 4. and so far as life and salvation is of or by any work of ours, there is room for our boasting, Eph. ii. 9. even as in the covenant of works, wherein life was by our works, not in the way of proper merit, but only by virtue of paction or covenant *.

Secondly, I shall explain and unfold that righteousness, the fulfilling of which was the condition of the covenant of works. And that we may have the more distinct view of it, I shall shew,

1. The parts of that righteousness.

2. The character which, upon his Father's call, the Lord Jesus took upon himself, in the covenant, in order to his accepting and performing the condition of the covenant for his people.

First, I am to shew the parts of that righteousness, the fulfilling whereof was made the condition of the covenant. And forasmuch as Christ undertook the performing of that condition in the room and stead of his spiritual seed, the debt of righteousness was and must be stated from the law or broken covenant of works, which they were lying under. For the law or covenant of works was so far from being neglected in the new bargain, that whatever it had

* Proper inferences from this point may be seen in the treatise on the covenant of grace, under the title, *Of the conditionary part of the covenant.*

to charge upon or demand of the elect for life and salvation, was summed up and set down in the new covenant, and the full and complete payment thereof made the condition of that covenant, Isa. xlii. 21. Psal. lxix. 4. This may from thence be summed up in these three things, holiness of nature, righteousness of life, and satisfaction for sin, which make the whole of the condition of the covenant of grace, the price of the redemption of an elect world, which Christ the second Adam undertook from eternity, to accomplish in himself, in their name, room, and stead.

1. Holiness of nature. That the law required as a term of enjoying eternal life, condemning original sin and corruption of nature as well as of life, saying, 'Thou shalt not covet.' For God being essentially and necessarily holy, nothing can be so contrary to him as an unholy nature. But Christ's spiritual seed were as unable to reach this holiness of nature, as any of their brethren of Adam's family; their nature was corrupt, and it was quite beyond their power to purify it, Prov. xx. 9. Wherefore, that the law might be satisfied in this point, it was settled as a condition of the covenant, That the second Adam representing them should be a man of a perfectly holy, pure, and untainted nature, fully answering for them that holiness and perfection of nature required by the law. It consists of two articles.

(1.) That he as the second Adam should be conceived and born holy, for and instead of his spiritual seed, conceived and born in sin.

(2.) That he should inviolably retain the holiness of nature for them, and in their name *.

2. Righteousness of life. This also the law required as one of the terms of life. The law given to Adam and all his seed, which they were obliged to obey in all points, by the tie of natural duty, and by covenant for life, was never fulfilled by them; and Christ's spiritual seed as well as others fell short of it, Rom. iii. 23. The first Adam began the course of obedience, but he quickly fell off from it, and all his natural seed in him. But the justice of God, and the honour of his law, could not suffer the reward, the prize, the crown of eternal life, to be bestowed without running the race. The elect having no ability for running that race, it was made a condition of the second covenant, that Christ as a public person, their representative, should begin and perfect the course of obedience to the law in righteousness of life. This may be taken up in these three articles.

* See the illustration of these two articles, *ubi supra*, under the title, *Holiness of Nature.*

(1.) That he, as the second Adam, should, in the name of those represented by him, obey the whole law.

(2.) That every part of that obedience of his should be screwed up to the highest pitch and degree.

(3.) That all this should be continued to the end, without the least failure in one jot of parts or degrees of obedience *.

3. Satisfaction for sin, Isa. liii. 10. The former two were in the condition of Adam's covenant; but this was not: for their being no sin, no satisfaction was due. But the new covenant, supposing the first to be broken, behoved to be settled on the condition of a satisfaction, in virtue of the justice of God, and of his truth, who had annexed a penalty to the breach of the covenant of works. And in this part of the condition of the covenant the following articles were settled.

(1.) That Christ, as a public person should satisfy for all comprehended in the covenant, all and every one of his spiritual seed, Isa. liii. 6.

(2.) That he should satisfy for them, by suffering for them, and in their name and stead, Heb. ix. 22.

(3.) That he should by suffering satisfy for them fully and completely, that the law might have no need to come back on them for any part of the satisfaction due.

(4.) That he should suffer the same punishment that they should have suffered in virtue of the penalty of the broken covenant of works, from which this debt of satisfaction was stated; and that was death in its full latitude and extent.

(5.) That he should suffer all this voluntarily, submissively, and out of regard to the wronged honour of God, willingly repairing it †.

Secondly, I shall shew the character which, upon his Father's call, our Lord took upon himself, in the covenant, in order to his accepting and performing the condition of the covenant for his people. Jesus Christ, the second Adam, hath a manifold relation to the covenant, as he is called the covenant itself: but here I meddle only with those relations to it which concerned the condition; and shall take them up in this threefold character, their kinsman Redeemer in the covenant, the Surety of the covenant, and the Priest thereof.

(1.) Christ became the kinsman Redeemer in the covenant, Job xix. 25. And there were four things which the kinsman Redeemer was to do for his kinsman, which he was not able to do for himself; all which Christ took upon him in the conditionary part of the covenant.

* See *ubi supra*, under the title, *Righteousness of Life.*

† See *ubi supra*, title, *Satisfaction for Sin.*

(1.) He was to marry the widow of the deceased kinsman, to raise up seed to his brother, Ruth iii. 9. compared with Ezek. xvi. 8. So our kinsman Redeemer undertook in this covenant to marry the widow, to take on man's nature in the fulness of time, marrying it to himself in a personal union with the divine nature.

(2.) He was to redeem the mortgaged inheritance of his poor kinsman, Lev. xxv. 25. Heaven and eternal life is the mortgaged inheritance. Our kinsman Redeemer took the burden of the redemption on himself, and agreed to pay the price of the purchase.

(3.) He was to redeem his poor kinsman, brought into bondage, paying his ransom, Lev. xxv. 47. Sinners had lost their freedom, and become slaves to sin and Satan. Our kinsman Redeemer agreed to give himself for them, for purchasing their liberty, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

(4.) He was to avenge the blood of the slain kinsman on the slayer, Deut. xix. 12. All mankind was slain, and the elect of God among the rest. Our kinsman Redeemer undertook the avenging of their blood on Sin and Satan *.

2. Christ became the Surety of the Covenant. This the scripture expressly teacheth, Heb. vii. 22. What suretyship is among men, many have known to their cost, to the ruin of themselves and their families. It is a man's taking on himself the person of another in law, and binding and obliging himself to answer for what can be legally demanded of that other person. Against rash undertaking of this Solomon cautioneth, Prov. xi. 15. It is twofold; suretyship by way of satisfaction for debt contracted, (Prov. xxi. 26), by the party whom one is surety for; and suretyship by way of caution for some deed to be performed by the party for whom one is surety, Prov. xx. 16. 'Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; and take a pledge of him for a strange woman;' that is, lest they will not perform, and the cautioner will be left in the lurch. Here I shall enquire, for whom and for what Christ became Surety in the covenant.

1*st*, For whom Christ became Surety in the covenant. Possibly it may be safely said, that Christ became God's Surety to us in the covenant, taking on himself to see all the promises of the covenant performed to the seed, even to all believers. For in the case of one unknown to us, though in himself most faithful, a surety may be necessary, especially if the party be of a jealous and suspicious temper. It is certain that God's promises are, in respect of his infallible veracity, most sure and firm, and cannot miss to be per-

* *Vide ubi supra*, tit. *Christ the kinsman Redeemer in the covenant.*

formed: but sinners are slow to believe, Luke xxiv. 25. And if Christ be Surety for God unto us, it is for the same end that God has given his oath in the case, Heb. vi. 17, 18.

But I doubt if the scripture calls Jesus Christ a Surety in that sense. In Heb. vii. 22. the only text wherein Christ is expressly called a Surety, it is undeniable that the suretyship respects his priestly office, ver. 20. with 22. and therefore his suretyship for us to God: whereas his suretyship for God to us cannot relate to his priestly office, but to his kingly office, in respect of which all power is given to him in heaven and earth, and consequently a power to see that all the promises be performed to his people. In two other texts only, we read of suretyship relating to the case between God and a soul; and in both the suretyship is not to, but for the soul, viz. Psal. cxix. 122. 'Be surety for thy servant for good,' Job xvii. 3. 'Put me in a surety with thee.' The original expression is the same in the latter text as in the former. Whatever is of this, one thing is plain, that it doth not belong to the condition of the covenant, but to the promises of it; and therefore lies not here before us.

But Christ became our Surety to God in the covenant. Thus was he most properly, if not the only, Surety of the covenant. The covenant of grace was made with the spiritual seed in Christ, as their head and representative, and their Surety taking burden for them upon himself, Psal. lxxxix. 19.

2*dly*, For what he became surety. This will appear by considering the nature of his suretyship. I spoke before of two kinds of suretyship. It was the first, the heaviest of the two, that our Lord undertook, viz. suretyship in the way of satisfaction for debt contracted, wherein the burden was wholly devolved on himself, and he was to be the sole actor and sufferer. The debt of the elect world was, by God's eternal foreknowledge, stated from the broken covenant of works, in the whole latitude of its demands on them: and Christ became surety for it, and so did strike hands with his Father from eternity, to pay it completely. And,

(1.) He became surety for their debt of punishment, which they as sinners were liable in *payment* of, as the original phrase is, 2 Thess. i. 9. That was the debt owing to the divine justice for all and every one of their breaches of the holy law, whether original or actual. The demerit of their sins was an infinite punishment, as being committed against an infinite God. They were liable to bear the pains of death in the full latitude of it; to suffer the force of revenging wrath, to the full satisfaction of infinite justice, and reparation of God's honour. This debt of theirs, Christ became

Surety for, engaging his life for their life, which was lost in law, where there was not the least hope of escape, Psal. xl. 6, 7. with John x. 18. In this suretyship there was an exchange of persons in law, which sovereign grace did admit, when it might have been insisted that the souls that sinned should die. And in virtue thereof Christ himself became debtor in law, bound to pay that debt which he contracted not, Psal. lxix. 4. And there was a double translation made on Christ in the covenant, from the elect, with his own consent, as a foundation in law and justice for exacting the elect's debt of him.

[1.] Their guilt was transferred on him, Isa. liii. 6. All the sins of all the elect were at once imputed to him, and so became his, as his righteousness became ours, viz. in law-reckoning, 2 Cor. v. 21. So that though he was absolutely without sin inherent, he was not without sin imputed to him, till in his resurrection he got up the discharge, Heb. ix. ult. having done them away, and cleared the debt by his death.

[2.] The curse due to them for their sins was transferred on him, Gal. iii. 13. The sentence of the law binding them over to bear the revenging wrath of God for all their sins, till justice should be satisfied, was with his own consent laid upon him. And in virtue hereof his blessed body was hanged on a tree, and the sentence of the broken law, Gen. ii. 17. was executed on that body and holy soul, Gal. iii. 13.

O heavy, yet happy exchange! heavy for Christ the Surety, but happy for poor sinners. Here is what is got on either hand by the exchange of the persons of Christ and his redeemed ones. All the sins of the redeemed are charged on Christ, for the satisfaction of justice by suffering for them: and all Christ's righteousness, for life and salvation, is reckoned on their score, 2 Cor. v. 21. The curse of the law comes on him for their sake: and the blessing of the gospel comes on them for his sake, Gal. iii. 13, 14.

(2.) He became Surety for their debt of duty and obedience, Matth. iii. 15. The law as a covenant of works, though it was broken by sinners, who thereby had incurred the penalty, neither lost its right, nor ceased to exact the obedience which at first it required of man, as the condition of life. The sinner was still bound to perfect obedience, and on no less or lower terms could have eternal life, Luke x. 28. The paying of the debt of punishment might satisfy as to the penalty of the bond: but there is yet more behind for him who will meddle in the affairs of the broken company. How shall the principal sum contained in the original contract be paid, the debt of obedience to the law for life and salvation? The honour of

God could not allow the quitting of it: and they were absolutely unable to pay one mite of it, that was current in heaven, Rom. v. 6. Eph. ii. 1. They were quite as incapable for the doing part, as the suffering part. So Christ became Surety for this debt of theirs too, the debt of obedience to the law as a covenant, which was and is the only obedience for life and salvation to the sons of men. Whatever the law can demand of them in this kind, holiness of nature or righteousness of life, he strikes hands for the payment of it, Psal. xl. 7, 8.

And here also there was an exchange of persons in law, as to Christ and the elect, he sustaining their person in the eye of the law, sisting himself for them to answer for every item of this debt, as their Surety. And in virtue thereof he became the law's debtor for that obedience which was owing to it by the elect: which debt he owned to be lying upon him by his circumcision, Luke ii. 21. compared with Gal. v. 3*.

(3.) Christ became the Priest of the covenant, Heb. vii. 20, 21, 22, 28. He undertook that office, and put on that character, at his Father's call, Heb. v. 4, 5, 6. to the end that he might perform the condition of the covenant. A priest is a public person, who deals with an offended God, in the name of a guilty company, for reconciliation, by sacrifice which he offereth to God upon an altar, Heb. v. 1. being thereto called of God, that he may be accepted. So a priest speaks a relation to an altar, an altar to a sacrifice, and a sacrifice to sin. Here I shall inquire, for whom Christ became a Priest, and what need there was of his becoming a Priest in this covenant.

1*st*, For whom he became a Priest. He became a Priest for sinners, Heb. viii. 1. Where there is no sin, there is no need of a priesthood: So Christ's priesthood speaks men to be guilty creatures, needing an atonement and reconciliation. And he became a Priest for those sinners whose names were in the covenant, and them only, that is, for the elect, whose names are written in heaven: for being the Priest of the covenant, he must be their Priest, and theirs only, who were comprehended in the covenant. In a word, he became the Priest of the spiritual Israel in the covenant, that Israel for whose behoof the covenant was made†.

2*dly*, What need was there of Christ's becoming a Priest in this covenant. The necessity of it will appear in these four things.

(1.) They were sinners, and there could not be a new covenant

* *Vide ubi supra*, tit. *Christ the Surety of the Covenant.*

† See this clearly proved afterwards in the discourse on Christ's priestly office.

made without provision for removing of their sin; and that required a priest, and one that was able to remove sin, and repair the injured honour of God. And such a one was Christ.

(2.) Sin could not be removed, without a sacrifice of sufficient value, which they were not able to afford. The new covenant was a covenant by sacrifice, Psal. l. 5. and it could not be obtained without sacrifice; it behoved necessarily to be written in blood, Heb. ix. 22. Christ becoming a priest, gave himself a sacrifice, for establishing the covenant, Eph. v. 2. and so it is the New Testament in his blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many.

(3.) No sacrifice could be accepted, but on such an altar as should sanctify the gift to the effect of the removing of sin. And who could furnish that but the Son of God himself, whose divine nature was the altar, from whence the sacrifice of the human nature derived its value and efficacy, as infinite, Heb. ix. 14.

(4.) There behoved to be a priest to offer this sacrifice, this valuable sacrifice unto God upon that altar: else there could have been no sacrifice to be accepted, and so no removal of sin, and so no new covenant. And who could that be but the Son of God only? Since himself was the sacrifice, and himself the altar, he himself alone could be the Priest*.

Inf. From all that has been said on the head of the condition of the covenant, ye see the price of sinners' salvation, the ransom of souls, the only valuable plea that a sinner can have for mercy, namely, the condition of the covenant performed by the Mediator. Let it be the great concern of your life, to be interested in it in a saving manner, as reckoned of God to have been performed for you. If it be not reckoned on your account, what will it avail you for life and salvation? Be concerned then for the imputation of that righteousness unto you. It is offered in the gospel unto you, that the holiness of Christ's nature, the righteousness of his life, and the satisfaction of his death, shall be yours, yours freely, as a free gift of righteousness, believe it, and lay your souls' weight on it by faith, and it shall be imputed to you.

SECONDLY, We proceed now to consider the second part of the covenant of grace, viz. the promise. This covenant is a proper covenant: and in it there is a promissory part, answering to the conditionary part which we have now explained. And it is God's part of the covenant, as the other was the Mediator's part; and is that which our text, *I have made a covenant with my chosen*, doth principally and expressly bear; compare ver. 4. 'Thy seed will I estab-

* *Vide ubi supra*, tit. *Christ the Priest of the Covenant.*

lish for ever.' The promise of the covenant is the bond of promise, whereby God has obliged himself to give the benefits specified in the covenant, and to make them forthcoming, upon the consideration of the performance of the condition. And forasmuch as the condition performed by Christ was strictly meritorious of the benefits promised, the promise is firm and binding, not only in respect of the truth and faithfulness of God, Tit. i. 2.; but also in respect of his justice, 2 Tim. iv. 8. which requires the Mediator's obedience to be rewarded according to the promise made in the covenant.

Of what weight and importance the promissory part of the covenant is, will appear by these considerations.

1. The covenant of grace hath its name from this part of it, Eph. ii. 12. It is called, 'covenants of promise.'

2. The covenant itself is by the Holy Ghost described as a cluster of free promises of grace and glory to poor sinners, without any mention of any condition, Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

3. The promises of the covenant are the purchase of Christ's blood, the fruit of his fulfilling all righteousness in his birth, life, and death.

4. The great design and end of the covenant is accomplished in the performance of the promissory part of the covenant: and that is the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners, Rev. x. 7.

5. The happiness and comfort of all God's elect, for time and eternity, depends on the promises of the covenant, Tit. i. 2.

6. The glory of the man Christ, as Mediator of the covenant depends on the promise of the covenant.

7. God has sworn the promise of the covenant, Psal. lxxxix. 3. Heb. vi. 17.*

For clearing of this weighty point, we shall consider the promises of the covenant in general, and then take a more particular view of them.

First, I am to shew what are the promises of the covenant of grace in general. They are promises made by God himself in that covenant, upon the consideration of Christ's fulfilling the condition of the covenant, as the onerous cause thereof, whereby he has secured all happiness to the elect, after Adam and his children had lost it by the breach of the first covenant, and hath also secured all means leading thereunto. These promises, in respect of the parties on whom they have their direct and immediate effect, are of two sorts.

1. Some of them have their direct and immediate effect on Christ

* See these seven particulars illustrated, *ubi supra*, tit. *The promissory part of the covenant.*

himself, the head of the covenant, who in his own person performed the condition of it; such as the promises of assistance in his work, of a numerous offspring to be given him, and a name above every name, as the reward of his work, Heb. xii. 2.

2. Some of them have their direct and immediate effect on Christ's spiritual seed and members, comprehended with him in the same covenant; such as the promises of the new heart, regeneration, cleansing from the defilement of sin, &c.

SECONDLY, To whom the promises are made. We may take up this point in these two things.

First, The promises of the first sort, viz. those that have their direct and immediate effect on the person of Christ, were made to Christ himself, Isa. xlix. 7. And they were made to him as head of the covenant, the second Adam, the representative of his spiritual seed.

Secondly, The promises of the second sort, viz. those that have their direct and immediate effect on Christ's spiritual seed, the elect, are made to Christ primarily, and to the seed secondarily. They are made to both, but first to the head, then to the members through him.

1. They are primarily and chiefly made to Christ. Though they have their immediate effect on the elect, they are made immediately and chiefly to him. This appears by several documents from the word of God.

1*st*. The express testimony of the apostle, Gal. iii. 16. 'Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made,—and to thy seed, which is Christ.'

2*dly*, Christ is by the covenant constituted heir of all things, Psal. lxxxix. 27. Heb. i. 2. And that must needs be in virtue of the promise of the covenant, which he purchased by his fulfilling the covenant.

3*dly*, As God promised life in the covenant of works to Adam's children upon condition of his perfect obedience, which is evident from death coming on them by his disobedience; so he hath promised life in the covenant of grace to Christ's spiritual seed, upon condition of his obedience.

4*thly*, All the promises that have their direct and immediate effect on the elect, are a part of the reward made over to Jesus Christ in the covenant, Heb. xii. 2. compared with Isa. liii. 10. They are all the price of blood to him, the purchase of his obedience and death, and therefore called *the new testament in his blood*.

This is a point of great weight, and serves both to inform our minds and direct our practice. For hence may fairly be inferred,

(1.) That the promises are not made to the believer's good works, but to Christ's works, and to the working believer in and through him, Rom. iv. 4. They are absolutely free to the believer, and not of debt to him, and therefore are not made to his works.

(2.) That the free grace whereby the dead elect are quickened, and made to believe, and unite with Christ, is conveyed to them in the way and sure tenor of a promise, as well as the grace that follows faith, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

(3.) The way to be personally and savingly interested in the promises of the covenant for time and eternity is to embrace Christ by faith, and thereby unite with him, 2 Cor. i. 20.

(4.) When through deadness and darkness of Spirit, or some conscience wasting guilt, the faith of the promise is failed in you, and ye cannot fasten your hold upon it again, because ye see no good in yourselves, embrace Christ again, and the promise in him, notwithstanding all your first unworthiness and guilt, and stand not off from the promises till you be in better case, Psal. lxv. 3.

(5.) The true way to plead the promises is, to plead them through Jesus Christ, to plead the accomplishment of them to ourselves for his sake, to come to God in the name of Christ, and to crave the fulfilling of the promises, John xvi. 23, 24.

(6.) *Lastly*, This may confirm and strengthen the faith of believers as to the accomplishment of the promises to them.

2. These promises are made to the elect, Christ's seed, secondarily, in and through Christ, 2. Tim. i. 9. As he has the chief and fundamental interest in them, so they have a derived interest in them through him, in respect of their legal and mystical union with him *.

Let us therefore take heed to ourselves, lest standing off from the free promise of life in Christ, we go about to seek our salvation another way. Let us be denied to all confidence in our own works, as we would not thrust ourselves into the room of Christ, and so he become of no effect to us.

[The author next proceeds to take a particular view of the promises of the covenant of grace, which he treats of as peculiar to Christ, and as common to his spiritual seed; for all which we must refer the reader to his *View of the Covenant of Grace*, under the titles, *Of the promises peculiar to Christ*, and, *Of the promise of eternal life to the elect, considered in three periods;* where they are handled more largely than in this work.]

III. The next general head is, to consider the administration of

* See all the foregoing particulars amplified, *ubi supra*, under the title last referred to.

the covenant of grace. Since this covenant is that which the salvation of the whole spiritual seed depends on, and according to it all the dispensations of God towards them, for carrying on and completing that love design, are regulated; and since it was withal a compact entered into betwixt the Father and the Son before the world began, and so in itself a great secret, Psal. xxv. 14.; it is necessary that there be an administration of it, whereby it may be rendered effectual, for the behoof of those in whose favour it was entered into. Wherefore the administration of it was devolved on Christ, the second Adam: and he hath it as one of his prerogatives, by the covenant itself, made over to him in the promissory part of the covenant, particularly by the promise of a glorious reward of his work in fulfilling the condition, John v. 27. It was for this cause the last Adam was made a quickening spirit, as saith our second text. And so he is 'given for a covenant of the people,' Isa. xlix. 8.; which imports the constituting him Administrator of the covenant, whereby the people, any people, Jews or Gentiles, may become God's people, and receive all the benefits of that covenant-relation to God.

Now, that Christ is, by the authority of heaven, constituted or made the covenant, imports these two things.

1. He is constituted and settled, by the authority of his Father, Administrator of the covenant. As he had the burden of purchasing the promised benefits, so he has the honour of distributing them, according to the measures laid down in the eternal purpose of God, with respect to the conferring of these benefits. None of the benefits of the covenant are to be had, but out of his hand: he received them from his Father, and sinners must receive them from him. That this is the meaning of this phrase, is evident from the following words, declaring the end of his being given for a covenant of the people: 'To establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages,' ver. 9. compare chap. xlii. 6, 7. 'That thou mayst say to the prisoners, Go forth.'

2. The whole of the covenant is in him. An administrator of one's goods must have them in his custody; he must have a power over them, as Joseph, who was to furnish the people corn, had all the granaries of Egypt at his command. Our Lord Jesus is such an Administrator of the covenant, as has the whole of the covenant in himself: so that he who has Christ has the covenant; and he that has not Christ has no saving part or lot in it.

For opening of the administration of the covenant devolved on Christ, we shall consider these three things, the objects, the ends, and the nature of this administration.

FIRST, who are the objects of this his administration, the parties to whom he is impowered, by commission from his Father, to administer the covenant. The elect only were the parties represented by the second Adam; and to them only is the administration of the covenant effectual to their salvation. But mankind-sinners indefinitely are the objects of the administration. The extent of it is not founded on election, but on the sufficiency of Christ's obedience and death for the salvation of all; nor is it regulated by election, but by the fulness of power in heaven and earth given to Christ as the reward of his work, his obedience even unto death.

To confirm this truth, which is glad tidings for all sinners of Adam's race, hearing that Christ is empowered by commission to give them, and every one of them the covenant, and all the benefits of it, to their eternal salvation, the following things may be considered.

1. The grant made of Christ by the Father, as the ordinance of God for the salvation of lost sinners of mankind. When the Israelites were in the wilderness, many of them were bitten by fiery serpents: in that case God instituted an ordinance for their cure, viz. a brazen serpent lifted up on a pole. And he made a grant of it to all who would use it for that purpose of healing, for which it was appointed of him, by looking to it, without excepting any that needed healing, Numb. xxi. 28. So all mankind being bitten by the old serpent the devil, and sin as his deadly poison left in them; God has appointed Jesus Christ the ordinance of Heaven for their salvation, and has made a grant of him as such, to all of Adam's lost posterity who will make use of him for that purpose, by looking to him in the way of believing, without excepting in this grant any, if they are but of the world of mankind, John iii. 14, 15, 16.

2. The Mediator's commission for the administration is conceived in most ample terms, Luke iv. 18, 19. Isa. lxi. 1, 2. He is to administer the covenant, not only to the meek, poor, broken-hearted, but to the captives, the blind, bruised, prisoners, slaves, and broken men who have sold their inheritance. What sort of sinners can one imagine to be excepted here? These terms are too general to admit of any exception as to sinners of mankind.

3. The ample powers given him as Administrator of the covenant. All power in heaven and in earth is granted to him, Matth. xxviii. 18. So there is none on earth excepted from his administering the covenant to them; the indemnity which the Father has put in the hands of his own Son to dispense, hath no excepted persons of mankind in it, but he is to dispense it to any of them all whom he will,

John v. 21, 22. And it is remarkable, that upon this fulness of power committed to the Administrator of the covenant, the general offer of the gospel is founded, Mat. xi. 27, 28, and xxviii. 18, 19. All without exception are declared welcome to come and suck of these full breasts of divine consolations contained in the covenant.

4. His executing of his commission in an unhampered manner, administering the covenant indifferently to any sinners of mankind; not this or that party of them, under this or the other denomination, but mankind in general, Prov. viii. 4. So the gospel in which the covenant is administered, is good tidings to all people, Luke ii. 10; and the gospel-feast is made unto all people, Isa. xxv. 6. Accordingly he gives his apostles commission in most ample terms, than which one cannot imagine more extensive, Mark xvi. 15. 'Go ye into *all* the *world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*.'

5. Consider to whom Christ stands related as a Saviour by office. He is the Saviour of the body only, Eph. v. 23. being considered as actually saving from sin and wrath. But considered as an official Saviour, he is the Saviour of the world, as he is expressly called, 1 John iv. 14. John iv. 42. And his salvation is called the 'common salvation,' Jude 3.

6. *Lastly*, If it were not so, then there would be some of mankind-sinners excepted, for whom there would be no manner of warrant to believe in Christ, or take hold of the covenant, more than there is for devils: which is contrary to the scriptures, John iii. 16. Mark xvi. 15 *.

Use. Know ye then that our Lord Jesus is empowered to administer the covenant of grace to you, and each one of you. There is a Saviour provided for you, to whom you have a right, and to whom you may have access for life and salvation. Ye have heard much of the promised benefits of the covenant: let none say, they are excluded from them. On the contrary, whatever ye are or have been, your name is in Christ's commission for administering the covenant: and ye must either take that covenant, or perish as despisers of it.

SECONDLY, What are the ends of this administration, or the business thus put into Christ's hand.

1. To bring sinners into the covenant personally and savingly, Isa. xlix. 5.

2. When they are brought in, to be the sole manager of them, according to the covenant, till death, John v. 22.

3. To complete the happiness of his covenant-people, according to the covenant, in another world, Eph. v. 27. Col. i. 22.

* The above particulars are more largely illustrated, *ubi supra*, under the title, *Sinners of mankind the object of the administration of the covenant.*

These are the ends of this administration committed to Jesus Christ; this is the work that he hath to do as administrator of the covenant. And the putting it in his hand was a method of grace at once adapted to the glory of God the offended party, the comfort and safety of sinners who had given the offence, and the honour of the Mediator the glorious Peace maker*.

THIRDLY, I come to consider the nature of this administration. And hereof we may have a view, by observing Christ's relations to the covenant, in which he stands as Administrator of it. We have seen already, that Jesus Christ, as party-contractor on man's side in the covenant, became the Mediator of the covenant, both substantial and official; that with respect to the conditionary part of it, he became the kinsman Redeemer in the covenant, the Surety of the covenant, and the Priest, the atoning Priest thereof. It remains that we consider his relations to the covenant as he is Administrator of it, which respects the promissory part thereof. And thus he bears a fivefold relation to the covenant, viz. the Trustee, the Testator, the Prophet, the King, and Intercessor of the covenant; each of which is a syllable of that name above every name, given him of the Father†.

From what has been said of the administration of the covenant, we make the following inferences.

1. As the covenant is well ordered in itself, so it is well ordered in point of its administration; and so it is ordered in all things, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Many a good bargain is marred as to the success of it by mismanagement, through the unskilfulness and unfitness of him into whose hands it is committed. But the covenant is put into the hand of an infallible Administrator, perfectly fit to deal with all concerned therein, and so cannot miss of an issue agreeable to the design of it. Two things are of fatal consequence in such matters. (1.) Unskilfulness; and (2.) Want of power and ability. Through either of these in the manager, a promising contrivance may be marred in the management of it. The administration of the covenant of grace is a matter that requires the utmost skill, considering the difficulty of the thing in itself, and the ill disposition sinners are of with relation to it. But Jesus Christ is infinitely wise, and nothing can escape his foresight or observation, Col. ii. 3. He knows well the fit times and seasons, and has 'the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him

* See these particulars amplified, *ubi supra*, under the title, *The ends of the administration of the covenant.*

† See all these relations illustrated, *ubi supra*, under their respective titles.

that is weary,' Isa. l. 4. There are many adversaries, set to oppose and counteract the design of the glorious contrivance, the administration of which is put in his hand: the whole force of hell is banded against it. But he is sufficiently enabled to carry it on over the belly of them all: all power in heaven and in earth being given him. And therefore one may conclude, that when the mystery of God shall be finished, the issue will be found exactly to answer the eternal plan.

2. While the covenant is administered to you, it is Jesus Christ himself with whom you have to do in that matter; he is the great Ambassador of heaven to you and each one of you, in this matter of the covenant, Heb. xii. 25. Ye would then look above ministers and ordinances unto himself, and regard them as persons and things by which Jesus Christ himself is treating with you, and regard him as your party with whom ye have to do. If ministers go beyond the bounds of their commission, ye may safely so far disregard what they say or do in that manner: but to fill your hearts with prejudices against them, on account of such and such faults ye espy in them, especially on the account of doing their duty, and so make yourselves very easy as to the ordinances by them administered, and to slight these ordinances under pretence that ye can spend the time otherwise to as great advantage; this is but to look on them as divided in their ministration from Christ, and so to cheat your own souls, 2 Cor. v. 20. Luke x. 16. What God then has joined, it will be dangerous so to put asunder. If ye took Christ himself for the party dealing with you, as indeed he is, it would engage you to take good heed how ye entertain the administration of the covenant among you.

3. They who would partake of the covenant, must come to Christ by faith, Isa. lv. 3. for that effect. He has the administration of it in his hand: so it is from him we must get it, with all the benefits and privileges of it. The whole of it is in him; so uniting with him we have it, and only that way we can have it. As is your interest in Christ, so is your interest in the covenant of grace; if he is yours in the way of special interest, your souls being married to him; then the privileges of the covenant are all yours, and the covenant is the security ye have for them, if ye are strangers to Christ, ye are strangers to the covenant of promise too, and so without hope and without God in the world.

4. Such as are personally entered into the covenant in a saving manner, and would improve the covenant for their daily needs, must still be coming to Christ for that end; since he is the Administrator of it, all the benefits of it are dispensed by his hand, John i. 16.

So the life of a Christian comes to be a life of faith: forasmuch as the whole supply afforded them from heaven is benefits of the covenant, and the riches of the covenant are in Christ's hand as Administrator of it; and the way of believing in Christ is the way appointed for receiving them from him. So the more a Christian is in the exercise of faith, the more he employs the Administrator; and the more he employs him, the more liberally he shares of the things of the covenant.

5. Sinners have abundant encouragement and security for their coming into the covenant, by believing in the Lord Jesus. We are not called to come to enter into a covenant with an unvailed God, the rays of whose glory in his holiness, justice and truth, and all his other perfections, might quite damp and dispirit the guilty creature; but as Christ as a second Adam has made the covenant with his Father, and fulfilled it in the whole of the condition thereof required on our part; so it is put in his hand, who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, to administer it unto any of the family of Adam; and in him we have the whole of it. Here all is ready for us, suited to our case. And we have his word of the gospel for our security, Matth. xxii. 4. and John vi. 37. And well may we trust him, believing the Son, believing his word, since the Father has trusted him with the whole administration of the covenant.

6. *Lastly*, There is no man who has the offer of Christ made him in the gospel, but if he continue in his sin, and die in it, he will perish with a witness, without all shadow of excuse, John xv. 22. The covenant is the contrivance of Heaven for salvation to lost sinners: in the administration of it, none are excluded from the benefit thereof; the net is spread out for even the worst of sinners, wherever the gospel comes. There is enough in the covenant for the worst of cases; the promises of it are made suitable to the sinner's case, both in respect of sin and of misery; so that whatever is their case, in the covenant there is a suitable cure. And that the sinner may at once lay hold on all, God has given Christ as the covenant to the people, making the embracing of Christ, the short and sure way for the sinner to have all. In him is lodged the quickening Spirit: so that by applying to him we may have life. They must then be left inexcusable who reject the offer of Christ, and will not come to him, that they may have life, John v. 40.

And now having opened to you the doctrine of the covenant of grace, that covenant on which the salvation of our souls depends, in discoursing of the parties in it, the parts of it, and the administration of it, I shall shut up the discourse on this subject, with a twofold use of the whole.

USE I. Of trial. Let every one put the question to himself, What interest have I in this covenant? Are ye personally brought within the covenant of grace in a saving manner, or not?

For your help in this inquiry, I shall offer you some marks or characters of those who by grace are personally instated through faith in the covenant of grace, before the Lord, under Christ the second Adam as their head.

1. They are such as have fled for refuge from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace, Heb. vi. 17, 18.

2. They are such as cordially approve of and acquiesce in the plan of the covenant, as suited to the honour of God, and to their case in particular, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

3. Having the discovery made to them of the covenant as made from eternity betwixt God and the second Adam, and in the gospel offered to them, they will satisfy themselves with Heaven's draught of it in their covenanting, so far as they understand it, and not go about to add to it, or diminish from it, Acts ix. 6.

4. The love of God in Christ, is habitually predominant in them, Prov. viii. 17. 'I love them that love me.'

5. Jesus Christ, the head of the covenant, is their head with their own consent.

6. The condition of the covenant, as fulfilled by Jesus Christ, is the alone ground of their confidence before the Lord, as to acceptance with God for time and eternity, and as to any of all the benefits of the covenant they look to partake of, Phil. iii. 3.

7. The promises of the covenant are a satisfying portion to their hearts, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

8. The spirit of the covenant is in them; and that is another spirit than what the men of the world are actuated by, Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

9. The laws of the covenant are in their hearts the holy law of the ten commandments, the eternal rule of righteousness, Heb. viii. 10*.

USE II. Of exhortation to sinners and to saints.

FIRST, Let sinners be exhorted to come into this covenant, by embracing it personally for themselves, so as they may be instated therein to all saving purposes. This covenant is brought to, and set before you in the gospel; so that you and every one of you must either be receivers or refusers of it. O refuse it not, for the refusing is dangerous beyond expression. Take hold of it, and embrace

* See all these particulars amplified, *ubi supra*. tit. *Trial of a saving personal inbeing in the covenant of grace.*

it, for it is your life: come, enter into it without delay. Ye are under the covenant of works, O sinners! where ye can have no life nor salvation. But the door of the new covenant is opened unto you, come, flee from the covenant ye were born under, and are living under; and let the sacred knot be cast this day, by your entering within the bond of the covenant of grace, accepting and embracing the offered covenant, to the instating of you personally in it, to all the purposes of life and salvation, grace and glory, by it.

But that ye may more clearly perceive the duty ye are called to, and may not walk in the dark, in your aiming at embracing the covenant, and that the motives to it may have the more weight, I shall,

1. Lay before you, by what means it is that a soul embraceth the covenant of grace, and is instated in it effectually to salvation.

2. Offer some motives to press the exhortation on sinners to enter personally into the covenant.

First, I shall lay before you, by what means it is that a soul embraceth the covenant of grace, and is instated in it effectually to salvation. This, in one word, is by faith in Jesus Christ, Acts xvi. 31. The covenant is held forth in the gospel to you: God saith to every one of you, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' And to state you in it personally, and to close the bargain with you, to all the intents and purposes of salvation, all that is required of you is *to hear*, that is, to believe, Isa. lv. 3. He that believeth is within the covenant of grace personally and savingly? he that believeth not, is still under the covenant of works, where the first Adam left him. This is the hand that takes hold of the covenant; thereby one signs the covenant for himself, and closes the bargain for his own salvation. This is the mouth of the soul, by which it consents to the covenant; and God becomes your God in covenant, and ye his covenanted people. So when we call you to embrace the covenant, and enter into it personally, all that we call you to is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That believing on Christ should be the appointed mean of entering sinners into the covenant of grace, is very agreeable to the nature and end of that great transaction. For,

(1.) Hereby the grace of the covenant is preserved entire in the dispensation of the covenant; and by that means the promise is made sure to all the seed, Rom. iv. 16. Faith is contradistinguished to works, as grace is to debt, Rom. iv. 4, 5. If any work or doing of ours were that upon which we were instated in the covenant, and got the right to the promise, then the covenant, and benefits of it, would be of debt to us, contrary to the very design of that method

of salvation, which is to exalt the free grace of God, and cut off all boasting. But the nature of faith on Christ is adapted to the exalting of grace, inasmuch as it is a grace purely receiving, not giving; taking all from Christ, without money and without price; laying the stress of the soul's acceptance with God wholly on what Christ has done and suffered; and renouncing entirely all doings and sufferings of our own in that point.

(2.) Hereby the sinner enters into the covenant, by uniting with Christ, who was the representative with whom it was made, John x. 9. and so the unity of the covenant and the representation in it, are preserved. If men entered into the covenant another way, as by accepting such and such properly called terms to them proposed, and promising for themselves the performance of them, the representation in the second covenant is marred, and there would in effect be as many covenants of grace, as there are persons embracing it at different times; at least Christ's covenant would be one, and ours another. But the covenant of grace being made with Christ, as the second Adam, in the name of all such as should be his, it is evident, that the only way of one's personal entering into such a covenant, must be by becoming his, standing related to the head of the covenant, as our head: and it is by faith, and no work or consent of ours differing from faith, that we are united to him, and become members of his body, Eph. iii. 17.

But here ariseth a weighty question, necessary to be touched, for clearing your way into the covenant, viz. What is that believing, by which one unites with Christ, and so enters into the covenant of grace? Believing, in the scripture use of the word, is trusting a word, person, or thing. And hence the scripture phrases of *believing to*, and *believing in*, i. e. having trust to and in; phrases, however unusual with us in conversation, yet ordinary both in the Old and New Testament. It is the trusting a word, as to report, Isa. liii. 1. in God's words, Psal. cvi. 12. It is trusting a person: thus the Israelites 'believed the Lord and his servant Moses; *Heb.* believed in the Lord, and in Moses his servant.' Job iv. 18. *Heb.* 'He believed not in his servants,' i. e. trusted them not. And it is the trusting a thing too, Job xxxix. 12. 'Wilt thou believe him,' viz. the unicorn? *Heb.* 'believe in him,' i. e. trust in him. Deut. xxviii. 66. *Heb.* 'Thou shalt not believe in thy life.'—And thence I conclude, that saving faith is, in the general, the trusting of a word, and of a person and thing held forth in that word.

Now, there is a twofold word to be believed by all those who would enter into the covenant of grace in a saving manner, namely, the word of the law, and the word of the gospel. The believing of

the former is a faith of the law; and of the latter, a faith of the gospel. The faith of the law is the work of the Spirit of God, as well as the saving faith of the gospel, though wrought by him in a very different manner. The former he works by the law, as a Spirit of conviction and bondage, convincing of sin and misery, Rom. viii. 15. with John xvi. 8. The latter he works by the gospel, as a quickening Spirit, a Spirit of saving illumination and adoption.

Whosoever then would enter into the covenant of grace, must, in the first place, have a faith of the law; which therefore is necessary to be preached to sinners. And by it a man believes three things.

1. That he is a sinner, a breaker of the law's commands, liable to divine vengeance. The law pronounces him a guilty man, and he believes the report of the law concerning himself in particular; and so, by this faith, his heavy and sorrowful heart echoes back to the voice of the law, *Guilty, guilty!* Rom. iii. 19. This faith is a divine faith, founded upon the testimony of God in his holy law; and rests not in the testimony of men, whether spoken or written. The Spirit of God as a Spirit of bondage, brings home the law to the man's conscience, and persuades him, that that law is the voice of the eternal God, and the voice of that God to him in particular; and so convinces him of sin upon God's own testimony. And thus he believes.

(1.) That his life and conversation is sinful and corrupt, displeasing and hateful in the sight of a holy God, according to the divine testimony, Rom. iii. 12. 'They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one.' He believes, what is true, that his omissions and commissions are to him innumerable; his righteousness and unrighteousness are both together sinful and displeasing to a holy God; that he is gone out of the way of God, and is walking in the way of destruction and misery.

(2.) That his heart is full of mischief and iniquity, according to the divine testimony, Jer. xvii. 9. 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' He sees those hellish lusts there, which he little noticed before. The law shining into the heart, discovers them; and pressing the man, irritates them; so as he believeth, that he has such a mystery of iniquity in his heart, as he could never before believe to be there, Rom. vii. 9.

(3.) That his nature is quite corrupted, according to the divine testimony, as one 'dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. ii. 1. And so his soul echoes back to the law's testimony, 'I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me,' Psal. li. 5. crying, *Unclean, unclean.* He sees that his disease is not accidental, but

natural and hereditary; and so that his nature cannot be mended, but must be renewed. And so he believes, not only that he does no good, but that he can do no good. And in all these respects he sees and believes himself to be an object loathsome in the sight of a holy God, loathsome in respect of his life, heart, and nature too.

2. By the law man believes, that he is a lost and undone sinner, under the curse of the law for his sin, Gal. iii. 10. He no more looks on the curse of the law as some strange thing, belonging only to some monsters of wickedness, and far from him. But the Spirit of God brings home the dreadful sentence of that broken law, and applies it close to him, as if he had said, thou art the man. And he groans out his belief thereof under the felt weight thereof, like a man under the sentence of death, Rom. vii. 9.

3. By it a man believes, that he is utterly incapable to help himself, and so that he must inevitably perish for ever if he get not help. He believes, that he cannot, by all his doings and sufferings, remove the curse of the law from off him, according to the divine testimony, as being 'without strength,' Rom. v. 6. nor change his own nature, heart, and life, in a right manner, according to that infallible testimony, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil,' Jer. xiii. 23. He believes himself to be a dead man spiritually; legally dead, and morally dead, as the apostle testifies of himself in that case, Rom. vii. 9.

This is the faith of the law: and the effect of it is a legal repentance, whereby the soul is broken and bruised with fear and terror of the wrath of God, grieves and sorrows for sin as a ruining and destructive evil, seriously desires therefore to be freed from it, despairs of salvation by itself, and seriously looks out for relief another way, Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 29, 30. Thus the law is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ; and the faith of the law makes way for the faith of the gospel. Not that this legal faith or legal repentance is the condition of the soul's welcome to Christ and the covenant of grace; our access to Christ and the covenant is proclaimed free, without any conditions or qualifications required in us to warrant us sinners of mankind to believe in Jesus Christ. But they are necessary to move and excite us to make use of our privilege of free access to Christ and the covenant: so that the sinner will never come to Christ nor embrace the covenant without them.

In calling you then to embrace the covenant, ye are called indirectly, and by consequence to this faith of the law, to believe that ye are sinners in life, heart, and nature; lost and undone, under the

curse; and utterly unable to help yourselves. Yet this is not saving faith.

Saving faith, which unites to Christ, is the faith of the gospel: for the gospel only is the ministration of righteousness, 2 Cor. iii. 9. It is in it that the righteousness of faith is revealed unto faith, to be believed, Rom. i. 17. That is the word which gives the sinner the only notice of a Saviour, of the atoning blood, and the new covenant in that blood. And hence it is that it is the only word by which saving faith is begotten in the hearts of lost sinners, Gal. iii. 2. In this word of the gospel the Lord Jesus, with all his benefits and covenant, is to be believed on and embraced by faith, Rom. x. 8. And the word of the gospel being received by believing, we have Christ and his covenant, with all the benefits of it; faith being indeed the echo of the quickened soul to the word of grace that bringeth salvation, Mark i. 15. Isa. liii. 1. Gal. iii. 2. a trusting of the word of the gospel, the person, viz. the Saviour, and the thing therein held forth to us to be believed on for salvation.

This is that believing by which we are united to Christ, and entered into the covenant of grace. So the question being put, how shall I personally enter into the covenant of grace in a saving manner? I answer in the following particulars.

First, You must believe that there is a fulness of salvation in Christ for poor sinners. This is the constant report of the gospel concerning him, Eph. iii. 8. Heb. vii. 25. He is therein held forth, as an able Saviour, able to save men from their sins, and from the wrath of God. His merit is a sufficient defence against the tempest of fiery wrath that incensed justice is ready to cause to fly forth against transgressors, Isa. xxxii. 2. His spirit is sufficient to sanctify the most unholy, 1 Cor. vi. 11. The righteousness he fulfilled as the condition of the covenant is so valuable in itself, and in the eyes of his Father, that it is sufficient to procure justification, sanctification, and all other saving benefits to sinners, who in themselves deserve death and damnation. So that they are happy who are in him, and they shall never perish, but have everlasting life; and they shall be eternally secure under the covert of his righteousness, as a sufficient defence. Believest thou this?

This is the general faith of the gospel, which, being without particular application, doth not unite the sinner to Christ, nor enter him into the covenant; and may be found in reprobates and fallen angels, as being only an assent in general to the truth of the doctrine of the gospel, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. and viii. 29. But it is necessarily pre-requisite to a faith of particular application, by the nature of the thing; for I must first believe a saying to be true in

itself, before I can trust to it for my part; and I must first believe a thing to be good in itself, before I can believe it is good for me. But where this faith is carried forward to uniting with Christ, it issues in an ardent desire of union and communion with Christ, an high esteem of him and his covenant, and a longing for his righteousness, as a hungry man for meat, or a thirsty man for drink.

Secondly, Ye must believe that Jesus Christ, with his righteousness and all his salvation, is by himself offered to sinners, and to you in particular. This is the plain voice of the gospel, Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. Prov. viii. 4. But, alas! few believe it; yea, none will believe it to purpose, till the Spirit of the Lord make it plain to them, and persuade them by an inward illumination. Many secure sinners hear the gospel, and are glad of the offer; but they discern not Christ's voice in it; they hear it not as the voice of Christ himself to them, but as the word of men; hence it hath no due authority upon their consciences, and so they pass it over lightly.

But where true faith is a-working, the word of the gospel-offer is by the Holy Spirit inwardly brought home and applied to the soul in particular, with power, as the word of the Lord himself, and not of men, whereby the man is assured that it is the voice of Christ, and to him in particular, 1 Thess. i. 5. and ii. 13. And so the man applies it to himself by believing. This is necessary; for without it there can be no receiving of Christ, and the soul can see no solid ground of faith: For it is evident, that there can be no receiving aright, where the sinner does not believe the offer to be made to him in particular. And here begins the application of faith, an application tending to union with Christ.

Wherefore, if ye would unite with Christ, and so enter into the covenant of grace, sist yourselves before the Lord as condemned sinners under the curse of the law; and hear and believe the word of the gospel as made to you condemned and cursed sinners in particular. And so it will come to you as the offer of a pardon to one under sentence of death, as the rising sun to one sitting in darkness, and the shadow of death. And let not your heart misgive by unbelief, but believe the offer, to be made to you, as it is indeed, (Isa. lv. 3.) by Christ himself.

Thirdly, Ye must believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, and your Saviour in particular, by the Father's appointment and his own offer; and that, by the same appointment and offer, his righteousness the condition of the covenant, and eternal life the promise of the covenant, are yours: Yours, I mean not in possession, but in right thereto, so far as ye may lawfully and warrantably take possession of, and use them as your own to all intents and

purposes of salvation. Think not this too much for you: it is no more than what is necessary to saving faith in Christ. If you believe only in the general that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and don't believe that he is your Saviour in particular, what do ye believe more than devils do? They believe that he is Jesus a Saviour, Mark i. 24. Ye must needs believe that he is your Saviour, if ye would go beyond them, and consequently that his righteousness and salvation is yours, in the sense before opened; for where Christ is given, all is given with him, Rom. viii. 32. How can you take or receive him as your Saviour, if he is not yours indeed? A man may take possession fraudulently indeed of what he does not believe to be his by right: but no man can fairly and honestly claim and take possession of what he does not believe to be his own. Certainly God must first give Christ to us, before we can receive him, John iii. 27. Giving on God's part, and receiving on ours, are corelates, and the former must needs go before the latter. Therefore believe firmly, that Christ is your Saviour in particular, his righteousness is yours, and eternal life is yours.

Fourthly, Ye must wholly trust in him as your own Saviour, and in his righteousness as made over to you, for his whole salvation to you in particular, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in his word. This is that saving faith, or believing on Christ Jesus, by which a sinner is united unto Christ, and personally entered within the covenant of grace, Acts xvi. 31. Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. Rom. i. 17. Phil. iii. 9. Gal. ii. 16. Acts xv. 11. 1 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 5. This, according to the scripture, is a sinner's receiving and resting upon Christ for salvation, as saving faith is defined in our Catechism. And this is indeed believing and nothing but believing, according to the scriptural use of that word.

1. I say, this is plainly believing in the scriptural use of that word. It is a trusting of or in a person, viz. Jesus Christ, and God in him, the personal object of saving faith, Acts xvi. 31;—a trusting in a thing, viz, the righteousness of Christ, the ultimate real object of faith, Rom. i. 17. therefore called faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25.—and a trusting in a word, viz. in the record and testimony of God, the word of the promise of the gospel, John iii. 16. the proximate or nearest real object of faith. And all this for the great purpose and end of salvation.

2. This is the receiving of Christ alone for salvation, John i. 12. God has appointed Christ Saviour of the world, and your Saviour: you hear that published in the gospel, and you believe accordingly, that he is your Saviour, by his Father's appointment and his own offer: thereupon you trust on him, and on him alone, for salvation,

and all you need for salvation. Is not this a receiving of him for your part in the character of a Saviour, wherein his Father sent him to you? a taking of him to yourself as he is offered to you? an using of him as your own Saviour by the divine appointment and offer, as trusting him for the ends for which that offer and appointment was made? Thus your whole case is put in his hand, with heart and good-will; and you truly receive him as appointed for and offered to you.

3. This is resting on Christ alone for salvation, according to the scripture, Isa. xxvi. 3. Neither can one imagine what way a person can rest on a word, or a soul can rest upon a person, but by trusting them, or trusting in them. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 8. and xiv. 11. So I conclude, that this trust in Christ is that believing on him, by which the soul is united to Christ, and brought into the covenant in a saving manner. And for opening of it, consider the import of this trust.

(1.) It imports not only a willingness, but a sincere and earnest desire to be delivered from sin and wrath; a desire to be sanctified as well as to be justified; to be delivered from the reigning power, pollution, practice, and inbeing of sin, as well as from the guilt of it, Rom. vii. 24, 25. For it is trusting on Christ, not for the half of his salvation, viz. salvation from wrath only, as many do who are by no means desirous to part with sin; but for the whole of it, even salvation from sin too, the principal part thereof, Matth. i. 21. Faith is a believing with the heart and affection of the soul. The whole salvation of Christ is the believer's choice: it is the end he desires to compass, and the trust of faith is exerted as the means to compass that end.

(2.) A renouncing of all confidence in all that is not Christ or in Christ, as to that matter particularly. Faith overturns self-confidence, law-confidence, and creature-confidence, to build on a quite new ground, Phil. iii. 3. and Jer. xvi. 19. For it is a trusting in Christ and his righteousness wholly, a trusting or believing with all the heart, Prov. iii. 5. and Acts viii. 37. The believer is carried off the works of the law, to the blood of Jesus, for his justification; and out of himself too, unto the Spirit of holiness, for sanctification; being persuaded that no doing or suffering of his own can procure to him the pardon of, or atone for the least transgression; and that he is not able truly to mortify one lust, more than to purge away the guilt of one sin, Matth. v. 3. and Isa. xlv. 24. Thus is the sandy foundation overturned, that the soul may build on Christ the Rock.

(3.) A hearty approbation of the plan of salvation according to

the covenant, manifested in the gospel, as suited to the divine perfections, and to the case of sinners, and their own case in particular, Matth. xi. 6. and 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. Without this, no man that knows what God is, what sin is, and what is the worth of his own soul, will ever venture his salvation upon it. One's trusting his salvation to Christ and his righteousness, speaks him to be well pleased therewith, as what one may safely trust to, and that in the sight of a holy just God. And this is that rejoicing in Christ Jesus which makes an illustrious part of the believer's character, Phil. iii. 3. It implies,

[1.] An eyeing of Jesus Christ in this matter as a crucified Saviour, having fulfilled all righteousness, according to the stated condition of the covenant, 1 Cor. ii. 2. This is the view that faith takes of Christ, while the sinner stands trembling before a holy God, beholding him as lifted up on the cross, as the brazen serpent was on the pole in the wilderness, Isa. xlv. 22. So faith is called faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25.; his righteousness whereof the shedding of his blood was the completing part, being the only spring of the believer's hope.

[2.] A real persuasion of the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, to save sinners, and them in particular, from sin and wrath; to answer for them before a holy just God in the eye of his holy law, and procure for them eternal holiness and happiness, Phil. iii. 9. There is no saving faith without this; Christ's ability must be believed, and that with application to your own case, Matt. ix. 28. And in order to this, faith fixes its view on Christ's righteousness, as the righteousness of God, and so of infinite value and efficacy, Phil. iii. 9. 1 John i. 7. The reason why the gospel, and no other doctrine whatever, is the power of God to the salvation of sinners, is because therein is revealed the righteousness of God unto faith, Rom. i. 16, 17.; and that is the only righteousness suited to the divine perfections and the sinner's case.

[3.] An acquiescing in that way of salvation for themselves, Matth. xi. 6. The believer sees the sufficiency and safety of it, and he hath a cordial liking of it for the way of his salvation. The mistery of Christ is to him the power of God, and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. His soul pronounces them safe and blessed that are in it; he desires for his own part to be found in it, Phil. iii. 9. and is persuaded he would be well, saved from sin and wrath, if he were in it.

(4.) A betaking one's self unto Christ and his righteousness alone, for salvation from sin and wrath. This is done by this trusting on him and his righteousness wholly, Ruth ii. 12. The sinner believ-

ing that Christ is his Saviour and that his righteousness, is made over to him by free gift, and withal that this his Saviour, with his righteousness is sufficient to save him from sin and wrath, doth accordingly trust on Christ and his righteousness, for salvation from sin and wrath.

5. *Lastly*, An affiance, confidence, or trust on Christ and his righteousness, that he will save us from sin and wrath, according to his promise. That faith is an affiance, confidence, or trust, is evident from the whole tenor of the holy scripture. So it is expressly called, Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. and l. 10. Psal. xxviii. 7. and cxviii. 8, 9. Heb. x. 35. And that it is a particular trust, viz. that Christ will save us, is evident from the nature of the thing: for he that trusts in a person for a thing, hath surely a persuasion of the same degree with the trust, that that person will do that thing for him. And hence where the party trusted doth fail, the party trusting is confounded and ashamed, as being disappointed in that which he trusted he would do for him: and since the trust of faith is never disappointed, therefore it is observed, that the believer shall never be ashamed, Rom. x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 6. 2 Tim. i. 12.; which plainly imports the trust of faith in the Lord to be, that he will do for the sinner what he trusts him for, otherwise there would be no place for this shame in any case*.

Secondly, I come now to offer some motives to press the exhortation on sinners to enter personally into the covenant.

1. Being out of this covenant, ye are under the broken covenant of works, which makes your state a deplorable one. Some stand off from the gospel covenant, because they do not incline to come under a covenant with God. But, alas! they do not consider, that there never was nor will be a moment of their life wherein they were or are free from a covenant with God. Ye are born under the covenant of works, and the bond of the covenant is fast wreathed about your necks, as long as ye are out of the covenant of grace: for the two covenants divide the whole world between them, Rom. vi. 14.; and there is no getting out of the bond of the first covenant, but by marrying with Christ, and so coming under the bond of the second, Rom. vii. 4. And of the broken covenant I may say, that it is strong to command, curse, condemn, and kill those under it, Gal. iii. 10. but absolutely barren as to the affording strength for duty, life, or salvation, Rom. viii. 3.

* Some few enlargements in these particulars, with objections of serious exercised souls relative to the doctrine here laid down, and answers thereto may be seen, *ubi supra*, under the title, *The faith of the gospel instating in the covenant.*

2. Ye are all under the covenant of grace externally and by profession, as being baptized in the name of Christ, Gal. iii. 27. Why will ye not really be what you have professed to be, members of Christ, believing in him, within the bond of the covenant in a saving manner? Why will ye aggravate your own condemnation, by professing to take hold of the covenant, and yet before the Lord keeping your necks out of that yoke?

3. It is a most honourable covenant. The parties in it confederate are God and his own Son Jesus Christ, and in him the general assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. And seemeth it a small thing to you to be confederated with these?

4. It is a most precious covenant, being a covenant in the blood of the Son of God, 1 Cor. xi. 25. It could not be purchased otherwise: heaven and earth, set at odds by the breaking of the first covenant, could not be united again at less expence. Slight it not.

5. It is a most advantageous covenant, and most suitable for you. It is most advantageous for time and for eternity, 1 Tim. iv. 8. There is no case you are or can be in, but there is a suitable help for it in the covenant. Yea, it is suited to your inability for the duties of it, not by loosing the bond of the holy commandments, but promising strength, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. and to your fickleness and native instability, John x. 28, 29.

6. It is freely offered to you, and every one of you, Rev. xxii. 17. Not only is there a warrant for your entering into it, but that warrant is intimated to you, and ye are invited, yea commanded, to come in, Luke xiv. 23. 1 John iii. 23.

7. Jesus Christ himself is appointed Administrator of it to you, Isa. lxi. 1. Regard it for the sake of the glorious Administrator. He is Heaven's Ambassador to you, and every one of you, in the matter of this covenant: so that if ye refuse it, ye must refuse it at his hand.

8. He administers it to sinners very honourably, taking them to himself, that he may bring them into the covenant, admitting them into it by union with himself.

9. *Lastly*, Without this covenant there is no salvation, Eph. ii. 12. Either ye must be in it, or perish for ever. When the first covenant was broken, there was a second made for the help of sinners; if ye refuse the second, there is not a third. It is the last ship bound for Immanuel's land.

Wherefore let this be a time of your embracing the covenant; and ye that have embraced it before, renew your acceptance of it, that ye may get it sealed by the sacrament.

(1.) Stir up the faith of the law in your own souls, as a preparative to the faith of the gospel.

(2.) Set before you the promises of the gospel, and believe on Jesus Christ, in whom they are all yea and Amen.

(3.) *Lastly*, In solemn prayer to God, be as express and particular as may be in these things, and so solemnly enter into the covenant in express words before the Lord, Isaiah xliv. 5.

SECONDLY, and lastly, Let those who have personally entered into the covenant of grace, and are now by faith instated in it, walk worthy of the covenant, walk as becomes the covenant, Phil. i. 27. Look to the covenant which ye are taken into, and let your life and conversation be agreeable thereto.

1. Be holy in the whole of your life, 1 Pet. i. 15. Holiness is the great end of the covenant, next to the glory of God. It is the holy covenant ye are brought into; holiness goes through the whole of it, and the design of it was to make sinners holy. And ye must evidence the reality of your being in it by holiness, holiness of heart and life, Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. An unholy life, and an unsanctified heart in which sin rules and reigns, will be a decisive evidence of estrangedness from the covenant.

2. Turn not back to your former lusts in your state without the covenant, 1 Pet. i. 14. The men of the first covenant live, and cannot but live in their sins, because death domineers under that covenant: and living lusts feed on their souls, as worms do on the dead body. But under the covenant of grace, life reigns; and the soul being thereby restored to life, will cast off these, Col. iii. 7, 8. Beware of backsliding and apostasy. It is dangerous to the last degree, Luke ix. 62. 'No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' That is the way hypocrites pull off their mask, 1 John ii. 19. Remember Lot's wife. But true believers shall be saved from it, Heb. x. 38, 39. 'Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' Wherefore, 'hearken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy Father's house,' Psal. xlv. 10.

3. Mix not again with the world lying in wickedness, but carry yourselves as a separate company, under a new covenant, and a new head, Acts ii. 40. 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation.' If ye are really brought into the covenant, ye are come out from among them: shew that it is so, by your keeping at a distance from them. The grace of the covenant secures it as to all true believers, Psal. xii. 7. And,

(1.) Chuse not their company, Psal. xxvi. 4, 5. It is dangerous as a pest-house, 1 Cor. xv. 34. Many of the truly godly have been wounded in their soul and conscience deeply thereby; witness Peter in the high priest's hall. Many who have had very fair appearances once a-day, have been ruined by ill company, Prov. xiii. 20. 'A Companion of fools shall be destroyed.' There is no eviting it altogether in this life, 1 Cor. v. 10. But take heed ye have God's call, and then may ye expect the divine protection. Why will ye chuse their company? they are not going your way.

(2.) Conform not to their way, Rom. xii. 2. Ye have declared yourselves of a different, yea, a contrary society; why then will ye do as they do? To walk according to the course of this world, speaks one to be a child of wrath, not a child of the covenant. Being come into the covenant, your privilege is beyond others: it is expected then that ye should do more than others, who have not your privilege, Matth. v. 47. The privilege is very singular, ye must then be singular in your walk, in comparison of the world lying in wickedness, though you should be wondered at, Zech. iii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 4.

4. Remember that ye are no more your own, but the Lord's by covenant, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. God has offered his covenant unto you, ye have entered into it: so ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Let this be an answer to the temptations that ye will meet with; say to them, as Jephthah did to his daughter, Judges xi. 35. 'I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.' If others say, their tongues and themselves are their own, and they have no Lord over them, ye cannot say it: for if you have come into the covenant, ye have said, as Isa. xliv. 5. 'I am the Lord's.' And if you are his, you must be for him only, wholly, and for ever.

5. Espouse the interests of the covenant, saying, 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' Matt. vi. 10. Have common friends and enemies with the God of the covenant, Psal. xvi. 2, 3. and cxix. 21. Your own interest is in it: and if it be really so, the interest of Christ's kingdom in the world will be yours, and ye will fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh, as the adversaries of the covenant. They are very low in the world at this day, and in this island; though the nation is under the bond of solemn covenants to God, that bond is little regarded, backslidings are multiplied, and the generation is dealing treacherously with a witness. If ye have embraced the covenant of grace for your own souls, it will natively produce a well tempered concern for the covenanted reformation of yourselves and the land.

6. Pursue earnestly the ends of the covenant. These are the de-

struction of sin, and the service of the Lord, Luke i. 74. Christ came 'to destroy the works of the devil;' hold to this end of the covenant in yourselves and others. Study mortification of your own lusts in the first place: labour to break the power of sin in others, according as ye have opportunity, and to weaken Satan's interest in the place wherein you live. Serve the Lord diligently in the duties of inward worship, and in the duties of morality, first and second table duties: and as we have access, stir up one another thereto.

7. *Lastly*, In all ye do, act as under the influence of this covenant, and not of the covenant of works. Be evangelical in all your duties, and the whole strain of your conversation. The covenant is a covenant of grace: let the grace, mercy, and love of the covenant, be your great motives to obedience, 2 Cor. v. 14. To pretend to embrace the covenant of grace, and in the mean time to serve the Lord as bondmen, just for fear of punishment and hope of reward, is to run back to the old covenant.

More particularly, walk worthy,

1. Of the parties in the covenant, Col. i. 10. 'Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.' The confederates in the covenant of grace, which ye are taken into, are the most glorious and honourable parties that ever entered into a covenant together; even God and his own Son the second Adam, under whom believers come in as members under the head. View the glory and majesty of these parties, the infinite wisdom, love, and grace to poor sinners, wherewith this transaction was managed from eternity; and consider yourselves as taken into the same covenant with them, and ye must see that ye have need to take heed to walk worthy of such confederates. And,

1*st*, Gratitude obliges to this. Should not the poor sinful creature, considering itself taken into the communion of God and his Son's covenant, look on himself as highly honoured, beyond whatever he could have expected? 1 John i. 3. and ought he not thereupon to be careful to walk worthy of that honourable society? to carry as becomes that honourable character?

2*dly*, The unsuitable walking of those taken into the covenant reflects dishonour on the glorious parties into whose covenant he is taken, Rom. ii. 24. While men give up their names to Christ, and yet walk in the way of sin, they bring up an ill report on the ways of God, and cause the graceless world to blaspheme the glorious name. Then,

(1.) Study to walk so as to 'be followers of God,' Eph. v. 1. Labour to imitate him in all his imitable perfections. He is your God, and ye are his people, if ye are really within the covenant; and

surely a people will strive to conform to the nature and will of their God. Be compassionate and merciful to those in misery, ready to do good to all as ye have access, yea even to your very enemies: so shall ye prove yourselves children of the God of the covenant, Matt. v. 44, 45.

(2.) Conform yourselves to the example of the Head of the covenant. They to whom Christ's death brings salvation, will follow the example he left us in his life, 1 John ii. 6. 'He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps.' He has writ a fair copy of a life for our imitation, John xiii. 15. and will have his people learn of him, Mat. xi. 29. We are apt to follow examples in things suited to our nature. Christ's example is every whit perfect, and no other is so: and what example should have more influence on the members than that of the Head?

(3.) Labour to maintain actual communion and fellowship with God in Christ, Cant. iii. 5. The covenant puts men in a state of communion with God, 1 John i. 3. That is a great privilege, but ofttimes much misimproved by God's own children, who fall secure and indisposed for converse with God, Cant. v. 3.; grieve the Spirit, and so provoke him to depart; regard some iniquity in their heart, and so mar the course of influences, and their own access to God.

(4.) Be heavenly in your frame and walk, Phil. iii. 20. God is in heaven, your head Christ is in heaven, and your treasure is there: why should not your heart be there too? The due frame of a communicant, that has taken hold of the covenant is set down, Cant. iii. 6. 'Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all powders of the merchant!' And it is sad to see those who are in the covenant grovelling among the dust of this earth, like those that are without; to see the heavenly seed like the seed of the serpent. Set your affections then on things above, and not on things on the earth.

Lastly, Let it be your greatest care to please God, to give content to the heart of Christ, Col. i. 10. It should be your great question, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' Let the love of the Father and the Son influence you to this manner of walking. And let God's displeasure be to you the most horrible thing, that you would rather venture on the displeasure of the whole world than his.

2. Walk answerable to the parts of the covenant. And,

1*st*, To the condition of the covenant performed by Jesus Christ, viz. his fulfilling all righteousness, in his being born holy, living holy, satisfying justice by his death and sufferings, to procure you the promises of the covenant. And,

(1.) Let the stress of your acceptance with God all along lie upon

that, and that only, Phil. iii. 3. Whatever you look to obtain from God, whether for time or eternity, let all your confidence for it be laid on that ground only. Whatever you go to seek from God, whatever sacrifice you offer to God, or do for him, let it be laid on that altar, as ever ye would have it accepted, Col. iii. 17. It is not only when our duties are ill performed, but when they are best done, that we must place our confidence here: for our best duties will otherwise be unacceptable.

(2.) Walk humbly as debtors to free grace, 1 Tim. i. 15. Look to the rock whence ye are hewn, and the hole of the pit whence ye were dug. See Ezek. xvi. Remember, whatever be your attainments, gifts, or graces, ye are decked with borrowed feathers: be not proud of them. The condition on which any promise is performed to you, you could never perform: the price of the least mercy you could not pay. Only Jesus Christ has set up the poor bankrupt again.

(3.) Walk in love, Eph. v. 2. 'Walk in love' to God in Jesus Christ. This is the fulfilling of the law: and there is the greatest reason for it, both for what he is in himself, and what he is to us. One flame is fit to kindle another. Such love was never seen among creatures, as God has shewn to man; and shall it not inflame our hearts? Walk in love to one another, and in love to mankind.

(4.) Walk thankfully. The whole life of a Christian should be a life of thankfulness, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Eternal life is won by Christ's fulfilling the condition of the covenant; it is received in the first-fruits of it, and possessed in Christ the head, by faith. What then remains but to express our thankfulness in a well-ordered life, for the unspeakable free gift?

2*dly*, To the promises of the covenant; they are 'great and precious,' 2 Pet. i. 4. Happy are they that have them for their security, and all that are within the covenant have them so.

(1.) Live upon them, let your souls feed on them, and account them the great stock ye have to trust to, Psal. cxix. 162. This must be done by believing them, and that with application. However little you have in hand, ye have a full covenant of promises, which are Heaven's bills and bonds, that make a good stock. And so reckon, that though ye have nothing, yet ye possess all things, viz. in Christ; ye have them in the promise, Col. ii. 10. 'Ye are complete in him.

(2.) Resolutely set about every duty in the faith of the promise. It will be too hardy to venture on the least without it: and the hardest and most difficult may be ventured on with it, 2 Tim. ii. 1. God calls his people to no duty, but what the covenant has furniture

for in the promise. And in the faith of it the weak is made strong, and without it the proud helpers stoop.

(3.) Resist temptations in the faith of the promise. The least of them is able to lay us by, if the Lord do not stand by us: the shock of the most violent of them may be endured, and one come off safe, if encountered in the faith of the promise, Eph. vi. 16. It is the promise in the hand of faith that keeps the tempted safe, and makes his resistance successful.

(4.) Bear crosses, trials, and afflictions in the faith of the promise, Psal. xxvii. 13. There is no getting forward to heaven, but by the way of the cross: these deep waters must needs be swimmed through; but the faith of the promise will bear up the head, and keep from sinking. It will bring in comfort from the covenant, when other streams are dried.

Lastly, Die in the faith of the promise, Heb. xi. 13. That is the last battle to be fought: and then the time draws near of the full accomplishment of the promise to the Lord's people; and that is a special season of exercising faith on the promises.

3*dly*, and *lastly*, Walk suitably to the administration of the covenant, which is a most happy one, as being lodged by the Father in Christ's hand. And,

(1.) Go to Christ for all you need. To whom should we go but to him, since he is Administrator of the covenant, and all is in his hand? Whether you need light, life, strength, or whatsoever is necessary for time or eternity, go to him for it.

(2.) Be obedient to his laws, the laws of the covenant. If he administers the covenant effectually to your salvation, he is your King and Lord, and ye must receive the law at his mouth, Psal. cxix. 6.

(3.) Submit to the discipline of the covenant. If ye meet with crosses, afflictions, and trials, take them kindly, blessing God that they are not curses, effects of revenging wrath.

(4.) Believe that all ye meet with is well ordered. It is so, for it is the product of the wisdom of the great Administrator of the covenant.

(5.) *Lastly*, Do your endeavour amongst all, as ye have access, to advance the covenant; that those who are without, may be brought in; and that those who are within, may be edified. For Christ is to administer the covenant to whosoever of mankind sinners will receive it.

Thus, by the mercy of God, I have treated fully of the covenant of grace, and laid before you the principal things relating to it; having formerly treated of the covenant of works. In the first covenant, see your misery; in this see the remedy, and apply it by

believing. You have here had the mystery of salvation by Christ opened up at large. May the Lord himself open your understandings to understand it, and your hearts to receive it; and save you from slighting it: for so it will be a witness against you.

OF CHRIST THE ONLY REDEEMER OF GOD'S ELECT.

GAL. iv. 4, 5.—*When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

WE are now to speak of the Mediator of the new covenant, Jesus Christ, and to consider our Redeemer in his person, offices, and states. As to the first of these, it is plainly taught in the text.

In the former chapter, and in the first part of this, the apostle insists upon the church's freedom from the Mosaic dispensation, which was a very toilsome and burdensome service. This he illustrates by the similitude of a pupil and his tutors, ver. 1, 2. and then he applies it in the following verse, (1.) To the church's bondage under the Old Testament dispensation, when she was in her infant state, kept in subjection under that rigid and strict administration, which served for a rudiment, whereby she was instructed for the most part by resemblances taken from earthly things. (2.) To her freedom from that bondage under the New Testament, in the words of our text. Where we have,

1. The season in which this freedom or redemption was brought about: *When the fulness of the time was come*, says the apostle. God wrought this deliverance for his people in the time that he had pitched and resolved upon, as the most fit and proper time for it.

2. We have the means of this deliverance, namely Christ's incarnation, and manifestation in the flesh; *God sent forth his own Son, made of a woman.* He sent his own Son into the world, the second person of the glorious and adorable Trinity, who was incarnate in a miraculous way, being conceived in the womb of a virgin, without the company of a man.

3. We have the condition in which Christ came; *made under the law.* Being made flesh, he subjected himself both to the precepts and to the curse of the law. He fulfilled all righteousness, and gave complete satisfaction to all the demands of the law in the holiness and integrity of his life, and he bore the punishment threatened for sin, in the bloody and cruel sufferings which he endured in his death.

4. The freedom and deliverance itself: *God sent forth his Son*, thus qualified, *to redeem them that were under the law;* that is, to free all the elect from the curse and punishment that was due to them for the transgression of it. Hence it is said, Gal. iii. 13. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' He freed the whole church from that rigour and servitude under which she was as to her outward state. And hereby also was procured to believers *the adoption of sons:* by which we are to understand, not only the benefit of adoption itself, which was the privilege of believers under the Old Testament as well as now under the New, but also and chiefly a clearer manifestation of that privilege, and a more free use and fruition of it. They have now a more full and plentiful measure of the Spirit than believers had under the Old Testament dispensation.

The doctrine arising from the text is,

Doct. 'The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew that the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Illustrate this grand truth, that Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God, became man.

III. Prove that Christ is God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person.

IV. Deduce some inferences.

I. I am to shew, that the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, Let us consider the titles and names of our Redeemer.

1. He is called *Lord*, because of his absolute and universal sovereignty and dominion over all the creatures. 'He is Lord of all,' says the apostle, Acts x. 36. His dominion extendeth to all things in heaven, earth, and hell; 'He hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all,' Psal. ciii. 19. He is the sole monarch of the whole world, and all the princes and potentates in the earth are but his deputies and vicegerents. He is 'the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,' as the apostle justly styles him, 1 Tim. vi. 15. He hath a natural and essential right and authority over all things as he is God, equal with the Father; and he hath a delegated authority as Mediator. The government belongs to him originally as God, and derivatively as God-man, Mediator. He holds his crown by immediate tenure

from Heaven. He is declared to be King by the decree and appointment of the Father, Psal. ii. 6. God hath invested him with a royal authority over all the creatures. It is said, that 'he hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the Head over all things to the church,' Eph. i. 22. He rules from sea to sea, and to the ends of the earth, yea, to the utmost bounds of God's creation. All the creatures are subject to his dominion, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, angels, devils, men, seas, storms and tempests, all obey him. But in a special manner he is King in Zion; he reigns and rules in the church, and sways his royal sceptre there. He is Lord of all the creatures by creation, of the elect by redemption, and of believers by their voluntary resignation and surrender of themselves unto him.

2. He is called *Jesus*, because he is the Saviour of the elect world, and delivers them from sin and wrath. This was declared by an angel to the virgin Mary before his conception in her womb, Luke i. 31. 'Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus.' This was revealed to Joseph in a dream, Matth. i. 21. The name *Jesus* is there interpreted to signify a Saviour; and the angel of the Lord, a messenger sent from God, is the expositor. Christ was sent by his Father to be the Saviour of the elect. Now, a Saviour in the proper signification of the word, is one that delivereth from evil. Accordingly Christ not only saves his people from the worst of evils, but bestows upon them the greatest of good. He delivers them from the guilt, stain, and dominion of sin, the wrath of God, the malediction and accusations of the law, and eternal death and misery; and he gives them grace and righteousness, eternal life and glory. He is a Saviour to protect and defend, and a Saviour to bless and save them, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. He is the only Saviour of lost sinners, and there is no salvation but through him, Acts iv. 12.

3. He is called *Christ*, because he was anointed unto his office by the Father. This title very fitly followeth the former. Jesus implies his office in general, and Christ his designation or ordination to his office. He is an anointed Saviour. This is frequently expressed in the scripture, Psal. xlv. 7. 'God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' Isa. lxi. 1. 'The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek,' &c. Acts x. 38. 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power.' From all which places we see, that Christ's anointing is not to be understood literally, but by a trope and figure, the sign being put for the thing signified. Several persons were anointed of old, as wrestlers among the Gentiles; which may be ap-

plied to Christ, who was to conflict and wrestle with all the powers of hell and the world, with all the oppositions and difficulties that were in the way of man's salvation. But this term of anointing is rather taken from the customs of the ceremonial law. There were three sorts of persons commonly anointed among the Jews; as kings. Thus Saul, David, Solomon, &c. were anointed with material oil; and hence were called *the Lord's anointed*.—Priests. All the priests that ministered in the tabernacle or temple were anointed, and chiefly the high priest, who was a special figure and type of Christ.—The prophets. Hence God gave Elijah a commission to go and anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room, 1 Kings xix. 16. As oil strengthened and suppled the joints, and made them agile and fit for exercise, so it denoted a designation and fitness in a person for the function to which he was appointed. Thus Christ, because he was not to be a typical Prophet, Priest, or King, was not typically, but spiritually anointed; not with a sacramental, but real unction; not of men, but immediately of God. There are two things implied in the anointing of Christ.

(1.) It implies the Father's fitting and furnishing him with all things necessary, that he might be a complete Redeemer to his people. As God gave him a body and human nature, that he might be capable to suffer; so he filled and replenished his soul with all the gifts and graces of his Spirit. Hence it was promised of old concerning him, 'that the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.' The Psalmist tells us, that he was 'fairer than the sons of men, and grace was poured into his lips.' He, 'received not the Spirit by measure,' but was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. All this was the Father's work, and therefore he saith, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,' Isa. xlii. 1.

(2.) It implies the Father's giving him a commission to redeem poor sinner's from hell and wrath. He was invested with a fulness of authority and power for this very end. And therefore in scripture he is said to be *sealed*, as having his commission under the great seal of Heaven. Hence he says, Isa. lxi. 1. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me,' &c. Every thing that Christ did in bringing about the redemption of an elect world, was given him in commission. His coming to the world in the fulness of time was by the order and appointment of the Father. So he shews, John viii. 42. 'I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.' The business on which he came was determined by Heaven. So in the text it is said,

God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, to redeem them that were under the law, &c. His death and bloody sufferings, which were the price of man's redemption, and the ransom of their souls, were enjoined by the Father. Hence says he, John x. 18. 'This commandment, (viz. relating to laying down his life,) have I received of my Father.'

Secondly, We may consider his office and work in the general. He is called the Mediator, which properly signifies a midsman, that travels betwixt two persons who are at variance to reconcile them. Now, Christ is Mediator, (1.) In respect of his person, being a middle person betwixt God and man, participating of both natures. (2.) In respect of his office; being a middle person dealing betwixt God and man, in the offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King. Which will be more particularly illustrated in the sequel.

He is the Redeemer. To *redeem* is to buy a thing again, as the nearest a-kin was to buy again the mortgaged land, and so to rescue and deliver from poverty, and misery, and bondage. This is the import of the word in the original. The elect are the redeemed: it is all they, and they only, as was proved before.

This redemption imports, (1.) That the elect were first the Lord's by creation, his property, and bound to serve and obey him. (2.) That they were sold, and in a state of bondage, in their natural condition, slaves to sin and Satan, the captives of the mighty; prisoners to the law, and obnoxious to the justice of God. (3.) That they are recovered or redeemed from this state of vassalage, captivity and slavery, by the Lord Jesus Christ. And they are redeemed by him two ways.

1. By price or purchase, laying down his life a ransom for them. He came to 'give his life a ransom for many,' Matth. xx. 28; that is to die in the stead of his people. His life intervened as a price to obtain their redemption. Hence is that note in the song of the redeemed, Rev. v. 9. 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' They were fallen under the dominion of Satan, and liable to eternal death, and could not obtain their liberty by escape, or by mere force and power; for they were arrested and detained prisoners by order of divine justice: so that till God the Supreme Judge was satisfied, there could be no discharge. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ hath procured their deliverance by his death and bloody sufferings. Hence the apostle says, Col. i. 14. 'We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' No less than the precious blood of Christ, who was God and man in one person, could be a sufficient price for the redemption of poor captive sinners.

2. By power and conquest. By his death on the cross he spoiled principalities and powers. And he manifested this power in his ascension; for when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive. And in the day of power he redeems his people from the slavery of sin and Satan, the curse of the law, from the sting of death, and the wrath of God; and puts them in possession of a full salvation.

The former, viz. redeeming by price or purchase, Christ doth as a Priest, the latter as a Prophet and King. Both were absolutely necessary: for without a ransom justice would not quit us nor let us go: and without overcoming or conquering power, the elect, while slaves to sin and Satan, will not quit their master, nor accept of liberty.

This redemption of elect souls was agreed upon by the Father and the Son in the covenant of grace from eternity. It was first proclaimed to fallen man in the first promise, Gen. iii. 15. that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent;' it was shadowed forth under the Old Testament by sacrifices, burnt-offerings, &c; the price was actually paid on the cross, when he 'made peace through the blood thereof,' Col. i. 20; and the powerful delivery is made in the conversion of the elect, the day of God's power, when the captives are delivered, their chains knocked off, and they are rescued from the miserable bondage in which they lay. And although Christ's blood was not actually shed under the Old Testament, yet the elect, during that dispensation, were delivered by the same redemption which we are now partakers of, Heb. xi. 39, 40.

Thirdly, That Jesus Christ, and he only, is the Redeemer promised as the true Messiah, is evident, in that all the things that are the marks and characters of the Redeemer agree to him, and him only. He was to be of the tribe of Judah, and of the house of David, to be born of a virgin, to be Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature and on our side, to be born in Bethlehem, to make a mean appearance, to be despised and rejected of men, to be crucified on an accursed tree, to be buried in a grave, to rise again the third day, to ascend into heaven, and sit at the right hand of God, till his enemies be made his footstool. It is evident from comparing the Old Testament with the New, that all these characters agree to Jesus Christ, and him only; and none other but one who possessed these characters could be our Redeemer.

II. Our next business is to illustrate this grand truth, That Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God, became man.

First, Christ is the eternal Son of God. And in this he differs from all God's other sons.

1. From angels, who are called 'the sons of God,' Job xxxviii. 7. They were filled with joy, and shouted with a triumphant voice, when they saw the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, appearing so illustriously in the work of creation, when God laid the foundations of the earth. Now, the angels are called the sons of God.

(1.) Because they had their whole being from him. They are his sons by creation; in which sense also Adam is called 'the son of God,' Luke iii. 38.

(2.) Because of their great and mighty power. Hence they are styled, principality, and power, and might, and dominion,' Eph. i. 21. They are like him in power and dignity.

(3.) Because they serve him as sons, cheerfully, willingly, and readily. They do not obey as slaves, or servants, or the best of servants; but they obey as children. They go his errands with a filial cheerfulness and delight. 'A son honoureth his father,' saith the Lord. It should be the temper and disposition of every son to do so. This is not only the disposition of angels, but they have actually done it, and may say unto God, as the elder brother is brought in saying in the parable, Luke xv. 'Lo these many years have we been with thee,' even ever since the creation of the world, 'and have never transgressed nor neglected thy commandments at any time.'

(4.) Because of the great privileges which God bestows upon them. He uses them as his sons and children. They are his courtiers, and near to his person, and always surround his throne, and behold his face. They are continually under the meridian beams of his ravishing and life-giving countenance.

(5.) Because of their likeness to God in essence. He is a spirit, an incorporeal and immaterial being, and angels are spiritual and incorporeal substances. Though the difference between God and them be as great as can be conceived, yea truly inconceivable; God being the creating spirit, and they created spirits; God being an infinite spirit, and they but finite ones; yet the angels bear a resemblance to God in their essence, as well as in their qualifications, and may upon that account also be called the sons of God: but they are only the sons of God by creation: Whereas Christ is his Son by an eternal and ineffable generation. Christ alone is the Son of God by nature.

2. Believers are called the sons of God, John i. 12. And they are so by adoption and regeneration, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Believers differ from the angels in this; for they do not stand in need of regeneration, or any gracious change to be wrought in them: for as they were created holy and pure beings, so they have continued in that

integrity and holiness with which they were made, and have not lost it: and therefore Christ is no Redeemer to them.

3. Christ differs both from angels and saints in this, that he is the eternal and only-begotten Son of God, as the scripture verifies, Matth. iii. 17. and xvii. 5.

Now, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, is the eternal Son of God, or was begotten of the Father from all eternity, is clear from the holy scriptures; for to divine revelation alone are we indebted for the knowledge of this important truth. To this end let us consider, Psal. ii. 7. 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' This passage is applied to Christ in several places of the New Testament. The word, 'this day,' doth not denote a certain time when this generation began, but is used to express the eternity thereof. And that which is eternal is expressed by that term, to shew and hold forth unto us, that all things past and to come are present with God in regard of his eternity. There is no succession in eternity, no yesterday nor to-morrow; but it is all as one continued day or moment, without any succession or change. Therefore the generation of the Son being eternal, it is rightly designed by this term. And although in this and the following verses we have a declaration of God's decree and appointment concerning the advancement of Christ to his Mediatory throne and kingdom; yet in this verse, the generation of the Son is not mentioned as a part of that decree, but only as the ground and foundation thereof. For unless Christ had been the Son of God by eternal generation, he could not have been our Mediator and Redeemer; nor could he have obtained a throne and kingdom as such. And this eternal generation of the Son was solemnly declared by his resurrection from the dead. This is the apostle's scope when he says, 'We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' Acts xiii. 32, 33. He might well say, this scripture, Psal. ii. 7. was fulfilled by raising Christ from the dead, because by his resurrection the truth of it was openly proclaimed and declared to the world, as the same apostle tells us, Rom. i. 4.

We may argue for this likewise from Micah v. 2. 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' This text is applied to Christ, Matth. ii. 6; and that it must be understood of him, and of no other, is plain, because he

is promised as the King and Ruler of his church: and in the following verses there is ascribed unto him the calling of the Gentiles, invincible power and majesty in his providential dispensations, doctrine, and miracles, and an universal kingdom and government over Jews and Gentiles through the earth. Now, there is a twofold going forth here attributed to him. The first is external and visible, namely, his going forth from the city of Bethlehem, by being born of a virgin. This is a temporal generation, and is therefore spoken of as a thing to come, 'He shall come forth unto me.' But lest any should look on him as a mere man, and as one that began to be at his incarnation, therefore a second going forth is mentioned, which is internal and eternal: 'Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,' or 'from the days of eternity,' as it is in the original text. These words design his eternal generation, as being begotten of the Father from all eternity; for he could not go forth from the Father from everlasting but by generation.

This truth is further clear from Christ's being called *the Son of God*. He is often so designed in scripture. The Father did solemnly proclaim him to be so by an audible voice from heaven, both at his baptism and his transfiguration. He is the Son of God in a most proper and singular manner, viz. by the Father's communicating the divine essence to him by eternal generation. This name given to Christ is more excellent than any name given to the angels, though they are also called the sons of God, Heb. i. 4, 5. 'For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?' He is so the Son of God, as on that account he is equal with the Father. Therefore, when he told the Jews, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' it is said, 'The Jews sought the more to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God,' John v. 17, 18. The Jews concluded from what he had said, that he made himself equal with God. And their conclusion was very just: for he did not find fault with them for so doing, nor charge them with reproaching him; nor doth he clear any mistake about it, as certainly he would have done, if they had been in any. Therefore what they conclude from his discourse is plainly asserted by the apostle, Phil. ii. 6. in these words, 'He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' So that Christ's scope and design, John v. is plainly to shew, that he was the Son of God in such a manner, that he was the same in substance with the Father, and equal with him in dignity and glory.

And as to the nature of this generation, our blessed Lord himself doth in some measure explain it to us, so far as we are capable to apprehend this great mystery, when he tells us, John. v. 26. 'As

the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' So that to beget the Son, is to give to the Son to have life in himself, as the Father hath life in himself; which doth necessarily import a communication of the same individual essence. For to have life in himself was an essential attribute of God; *i. e.* to have life independently, of and from himself; and to be the source and fountain of life to all the creatures, is a perfection proper to God, inseparable from his nature, yea, the very same with his essence. And therefore the Father cannot give it, unless he give the essence itself: and he cannot give the essence by way of alienation, for then he himself would cease to be God; nor by way of participation, seeing the divine nature is one, and cannot be divided. Therefore it must be by way of communication. So that the generation of the Son is that eternal action of the Father, whereby he did communicate to the Son the same individual essence which he himself hath, that the Son might have it equal with himself. But as to the manner of this generation, or communication of the divine essence of the Son, it is altogether ineffable and inconceivable to us. It is simply impossible for poor weak worms, such as we are, to understand or explain wherein it consists. It is not natural, but supernatural, and wholly divine, and therefore incomprehensible by us. Yea, it is incomprehensible even by the angels themselves, who far exceed men in intellectual abilities. We may justly hereunto apply what we have, Isa. liii. 8. 'Who shall declare his generation?' This whole mystery is incomprehensible by us: we ought humbly and reverently to adore what we cannot comprehend. There is a coummunication of the whole essence or Godhead from the Father to the Son, in receiving whereof the Son doth no more lessen or diminish the majesty or Godhead of the Father, than the light of one candle doth the light of another from which it is taken. Whereupon the council of Nice said well, that Christ is God of God, light of light, very God of very God, not proceeding but begotten. Hence it is clear, that he had a being before he was born of a virgin, yea from eternity; and that he is the true God, and the most high God, equal with the Father, Phil. ii. 6. John i. 1.; for no being can be eternal but God.

Secondly, The Son of God became man. It was not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, that was incarnate, but the Son, John i. 14. 'The word was made flesh.' He was 'God manifested in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. But though he was from eternity God, yet the world had lasted well nigh four thousand years ere he became man.

Thirdly, Why did it behove Christ, in order to be our Redeemer, to be God and man? he could not be our Redeemer, if he had not been both.

1. He behoved to be God, (1.) That he might be able to bear the weight of the infinite wrath of God due to the elect's sins, and come out from under that heavy load, Acts ii. 24. (2.) That his temporary sufferings might be of infinite value, and afford full satisfaction to the law and justice of God, Heb. ix. 14. In these respects none other but one who was God could redeem us.

2. He behoved to be man, (1.) That he might be capable to suffer death, Heb. ii. 14. (2.) That the same nature which sinned might suffer, Ezek. xviii. 4. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' (3.) That he might be a merciful High Priest, Heb. ii. 16, 17. and that we might have comfort and boldness of access to the throne of grace having an High Priest of our own nature as our Intercessor there.

III. I come now to prove, that Christ is God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person. Christ is God and man by a personal union of two natures. The two natures in Christ remain distinct: the Godhead was not changed into the manhood, nor the manhood into the Godhead: for the scripture speaks of these as distinct, Rom. i. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Heb. ix. 14.; and of two wills in Christ, a human and a divine, Luke xxii. 42. These natures remain still with their distinct properties, that as the divine nature is not made finite, so neither is the human nature adorned with the divine attributes. It is not omnipotent, 2 Cor. xiii. 4.; nor omnipresent, John xi. 15; nor omniscient, Mark xiii. 22. &c. Yet are they not divided; nor is Christ two persons, but one; even as our soul and body though distinct things, make but one person. This is clear from the text, which shews that the Son of God was made of a woman; which seeing it cannot be understood of his divine nature, but of the human, it is plain that both natures make but one person. And elsewhere he is described as one person consisting of two natures, Rom. i. 3. and ix. 5. And it was necessary that the natures should be distinct; because otherwise, either the Divinity would have advanced his humanity above the capacity of suffering, or his humanity depressed his Divinity below the capacity of meriting. And it was necessary that he should be one person; because otherwise his blood had not been the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. nor of the Son of God, 1 John i. 7. and so not of infinite value. Wherefore Christ took on him the human nature, but not a human person.

Lastly, Christ was, and so will continue God and man for ever. This union never was dissolved. He died in our flesh to save us; he rose again in it, and ascended to heaven in it, and will continue ever in it, Heb. vii. 24. It will be a part of the happiness of the saints after the resurrection, that they shall feed their eyes for ever in beholding the glorified body of the blessed Redeemer.

I shall finish this subject with a few inferences.

1. The redemption of the soul is precious. The salvation of sinners was a work greater than the making of the world. The powerful word commanded, and the universe sprung up into being; but much more was to be done ere a sinner could be saved from wrath. The eternal Son of God must become man, lay aside the robes of his glory, and clothe himself with the infirmities of human nature, and in that nature purchase redemption by the price of his matchless blood for poor miserable prisoners, and deliver them from the pit of hell and wrath by an exertion of his almighty power.

2. See here the wonderful love and grace of God in sending his own Son to be the Redeemer of sinful men. It was he that contrived this method of redemption, in the adorable depths of his infinite wisdom. He pitched upon his own Son as the only fit person to set miserable captives free. He fitted and furnished him for this work, and sent him to the world with full power and authority to go about it. It was God the Father that was gracious to sinners, saying, 'Deliver them from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.' What an illustrious display of the astonishing love and grace of God is it, that he should have remembered them in their low estate, and laid help on one that is mighty to save them. To enlarge upon this a little further, I offer a twofold consideration.

(1.) Who he was that was sent and came into the world to redeem the elect; not an angel or archangel, nor any of the glorious seraphims that stand about God's throne. Indeed, if it had been so, divine love, even in this, had infinitely advanced itself, that God should be pleased to spare one of his own retinue from attending on him, and give such a glorious servant as an angel is, for the redemption of such a rebellious and miserable worm as man. But O! how may it raise and heighten our admiration, when we consider that it was not an angel, if he had been capable for the mighty task, but the Lord of angels, not a servant but a Son, that the Father plucked from his own bosom, and sent upon this business! He spoke to him as it were to this purpose. 'Go haste thee down to the earth: for there are thousands of miserable creatures sinning themselves down to hell, and must for ever fall under the strokes of my dreadful and incensed justice; step thou in between them and it, and receive the blows thyself; die thou under the hand of vindictive justice; that they may be saved and live.' When God tried Abraham's obedience, he aggravates his command by many piercing words, which must needs tenderly touch, and greatly affect, the heart of a compassionate father, Gen. xxii. 2. 'Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land

of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering,' &c. It greatly heightened Abraham's obedience, that notwithstanding of all aggravations, yet he was willing to sacrifice his beloved Son upon God's command. Just so here God heightens and sets forth his matchless love towards us. He takes his own Son, his only Son, the Son of his eternal delight and love, and cheerfully offers him up as a sacrifice for the sins of men. This is the greatest instance of the love of God that ever was given.

(2.) God's love is exalted here, in that he freely sent his only begotten Son to be the Redeemer of an elect world. He was God's free gift, or else he could never have been obtained. If devils and men had joined their forces, and combined all their strength and power, and thus made an assault upon heaven, yet they could never have plucked the Son of God's love from his eternal embraces. God gave Christ freely to redeem a sinful world, not only without, but against all merit and desert in them, nay, unasked and unsolicited to do so. From all eternity God foresaw that they would despise and reject his Son, so that they would shed his precious blood, and then trample it under their feet, as an unholy thing; yet such was the height of his astonishing love, that he bestowed him freely upon them.

(3.) See the matchless love of the Son of God to poor sinners. It was love that induced him to substitute himself in their room, and to undertake to pay their ransom. He 'loved me (says Paul), and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. His love in this, as the apostle speaks passeth knowledge. How cheerfully did he engage to make his soul an offering for sin, that thereby he might pay their ransom! Though he knew the difficulty of the work, and the greatness of that wrath which he was to bear, yet he cheerfully complied with the first motion of it that was made unto him by the Father. He knew very well, what a vast burden of sin was to be laid upon him, and the dreadfulness of that wrath he was to undergo; yet he did not shrink from the imputation of the one, nor from the suffering of the other. He was willing to be reproached, that we might be glorified; to become poor, that we might be made rich; to be accused and condemned, that we might be justified; to enter into prison, that we might go free; and to die a cursed ignominious death, that we might live, and reign in honour for ever. O how great was his love to poor sinful men!

4. All who live and die out of Christ must perish; for there is no other Mediator between God and men but the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for sinners, and invites sinners to come and take the benefit thereof. Now, if men will not come unto him,

that they may have life, their blood must be on their own heads. Christ is the only ordinance of God for life and salvation, and if men will slight and despise this ordinance, they must perish in their sins; for there is no other way of being saved but by him. If sinners will not enter by this door in time, the door of heaven will be shut against them for ever.

5. How highly is our nature exalted and dignified in the person of the Lord Jesus! He took not on him the nature of angels, a nature far superior to the human, but the seed of Abraham, and united it to his divine person. In that nature he performed his whole Mediatory undertaking, and wears it in his exalted state. It is corrupt in the multitude of those that partake of it, yet it is pure and spotless in Christ the Redeemer. Man's nature became so depraved and abominable by Adam's transgression, that it could never again appear before God; but in Christ it is so perfectly pure, that it was capable of an immediate union with the Godhead in his person. Though it be low and mean in itself, yet it is highly honoured and exalted in its union with the Son of God; and shall be the object of the delightful sight and admiration of the redeemed from among men through eternal ages.

6. It is impious and absurd to ascribe any part of man's redemption to any other. In the close of his sufferings on the cross, he cried with a loud voice, 'It is finished,' and gave up the ghost; intimating, that he had then perfected and completely finished the great work of redemption committed to and undertaken by him. It is therefore dishonourable to Christ, and dangerous for men, to join any thing of their own to his righteousness, in point of justification before God. The blessed Redeemer will never endure it. It reflects upon his Mediatory undertaking. If he be the only Redeemer of God's elect, then certainly there can be no other. If he hath finished that work, then there is no need of our additions. And if that work be not finished by him, how can it be finished by men? It is simply impossible for any creature to finish that which Christ himself could not. But men would fain be sharing with him in this honour, which he will never endure. He is the only Saviour of sinners; and he will never divide the glory of it with us. Men would fain have something of their own to atone offended justice. There is a legal strain, a strong bias towards the first covenant, running in the hearts of all men by nature. We would do something for ourselves, and are unwilling to be obliged to another for our deliverance from that wretched condition that sin hath brought us into. 'What good thing shall I do (said the young man in the gospel) that I may have eternal life.' But all our righteousnesses are but

as filthy rags. Though your heads were waters, and your eyes a fountain of tears, and you should weep day and night continually; nay, though you should weep tears of blood, all would be in vain; for it could not cleanse you from the guilt and pollution of the least sin. To depend upon anything that ever he did, or can possibly do, is but like the setting up of a paper-wall to keep off a devouring fire: for it cannot screen you from the consuming flames of God's wrath and fiery indignation. 'By the works of the law (says the apostle), no flesh can be justified.'

7. *Lastly*, If ye would be delivered from the state of sin and misery into which ye are brought by your fall in the first Adam, come unto and accept of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Redeemer. God has laid help for you upon this mighty One, who is both able and willing to save all that come unto God by him. Close with him by faith, and you shall be redeemed from the guilt of sin, have its power subdued in you, and at last be delivered from the inbeing of it, and from all the penal consequences and effects thereof. He is now saying, Behold me, behold me; O do not refuse him, lest ye perish for ever.

OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION.

LUKE i. 35.—*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

THESE words are the angel's answer to Mary, who, understanding the angel as speaking of a thing presently to be done before Joseph and she should come together, desires to know how she, being a virgin, should conceive. Here,

1. The angel tells her how she should 'conceive and bring forth a Son,' namely by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the power of the Highest, the Spirit of God being the true God, and so the Highest. The author of this conception is the Holy Ghost, not to exclude the Father and the Son, who also concurred to this work, as to all works without God himself; and besides the power of all the three persons is one. But it is appropriated to the Spirit, as creation to the Father, and redemption to the Son, so the consummation of all things to the Spirit. The way of the Spirit's powerful working to this miraculous conception, is denoted by two words. One is, *that the Holy Ghost should come upon her*, not in an ordinary way, as

in the conception of all men, Job x. 8. 'Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about;' but in an extraordinary way, as on the prophets, and those that were raised to some extraordinary work. The other is, that *the power of the Highest*, which is infinite power, *should overshadow her*, to wit, make her, though a virgin, to conceive by virtue of the efficacy of infinite power, by which the world was created, when the same Spirit moved on the waters, cherished them, and framed the world. I shall say no more of this, seeing the Holy Spirit did overshadow or cast a cloud over the virgin in this operation, that men might not pry curiously into this mystery.

2. He shews what should follow on this miraculous conception, namely, that the fruit of her womb, the child she should bear, should be called *the Son of God*. Where the angel teaches two things. (1.) The immaculate sinless conception of the child Jesus, *that holy thing*, a holy thing though proceeding from a sinful creature, not tainted with sin, as all other children are. Job asks, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' and answers, 'Not one.' But though this be impossible with men, yet it is possible with God, whose infinite power can do every thing. The powerful operation of the divine Spirit sanctified that part of the virgin's body of which the human nature of Christ was formed, so that by that influence it was separated from all impurity and defilement. So that, though it proceeded from a creature infected with original sin, there was no sin or taint of impurity in it. This was a glorious instance of the power of the Highest. (2.) He tells the virgin, that therefore, seeing that child to be thus conceived, he should be *called*, that is, owned to be, *the Son of God*. He says not, Therefore that holy thing shall be the Son of God, for he was the Son of God before, by virtue of his eternal generation; but, Therefore he shall be *called*, i. e. owned to be really so, and more than a man. The reason of this is, because Isaiah had prophesied that the Son of God should be the Son of a virgin. When therefore you, a virgin, shall conceive, your child shall be acknowledged to be the Son of God in man's nature. Matth. i. 22, 23. 'Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.' He was promised to the church as the Messiah, 'a child born unto us, a son given unto us,' Isa. ix. 6. And he actually was so, Luke ii. 11.

Doct. 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the

power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. Who she was that was the mother of Christ as man.

II. What we are to understand by his becoming man.

III. That he was true man.

IV. What we are to understand by his being conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary.

V. Why he was born of a virgin.

VI. Make application in a few inferences.

I. I am to shew who she was that was the mother of Christ as man. Christ as God had no mother, and as man no father. But his mother as man was Mary. She was the seed of Abraham; and so Christ was that seed of Abraham, in whom all nations were to be blessed, Gal. iii. 16. She was of the tribe of Judah, Luke iii. 33. and of that tribe Christ by her did spring, Heb. vii. 14. She was also of the family of David, as appears by her genealogy, Luke iii. and therefore Christ is called the Son of David, as the Messiah behoved to be. She was, however, but a mean woman, the family of David being then reduced to a low outward condition in the world, having long before lost its flourishing state; so that our Lord 'sprung up as a root out of a dry ground,' Isa. xi. 1. and liii. 2.

She was a virgin before and at the time of her bringing forth Jesus, but espoused to Joseph, who was of the same tribe with her. What she was after, I think Christians should raise no question about that matter, seeing the scripture has buried it in silence. And therefore, as they are presumptuous who would always make her being a virgin an article of faith, so they are rash that would define the contrary. For they are but little versed in the scripture, who know not that kinsmen among the Jews are ordinarily in sacred writ called *brethren;* as Abraham and Lot, his brother's son, are called *brethren*, Gen. xiii. 8. So no argument can be drawn from persons being designed *the brethren of Christ*, in the evangelists, to prove that Mary bore children to Joseph.

II. I come to shew what we are to understand by Christ's becoming man. It implies,

1. That he had a real being and existence before his incarnation. He truly was before he was conceived in the womb of the virgin, and distinct from that being which was conceived in her. He tells us himself, that he was in heaven before he ascended thither: 'What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?' John vi. 62. Yea, he was with his Father from all eternity, before any of the creatures came out of the womb of nothing.

So Prov. viii. 29, 30, 'When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.' Here the Spirit of God describes the most blessed state of Jesus Christ, from those eternal delights which he had had with his Father before his assumption of our nature, 'Then I was by him,' or 'with him:' he was so with him, as never any other was, even in his very bosom, John i. 18. 'The word was with God,' ver. 1. And he calls himself 'the bread of life that came down from heaven,' chap. vi. ver. 33. Here he opposeth himself to the manna, wherewith God fed the Israelites in the wilderness, which never was really in heaven, nor had its original from thence. 'Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but the Father gave you Christ really from thence.' John xvi. 28. 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.' He is called 'Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.'

2. That he actually took upon him our nature. He assumed the entire nature of man into the unity of his divine person, with all its integral parts and essential properties; and so was made or became a real and true man by that assumption. Hence it is said, John i. 14. 'The Word was made flesh.' But though Jesus Christ had two natures, yet not two persons, which was the error of Nestorius, who lived in the fourth century. He so rent the natures of Christ asunder, as to make two distinct persons of them, and consequently two Christs, of which one was crucified at Jerusalem, and the other not, as he blasphemously alleged; and so he plainly denied the hypostatical union of the divine and human natures in the person of our blessed Redeemer. But though Christ had two natures, yet but one person: for his human nature never subsisted separately and distinctly by any personal subsistence of its own, as it is in all other men; but, from the first moment of his conception, it subsisted in union with the second person of the adorable Trinity. Again, though 'the Word was made flesh,' yet it was without any confusion of the natures, or change of the one into the other: which was the heresy of the Eutychians of old, who so confounded the two natures in the person of Christ, that they denied all distinction between them. Eutyches thought that the union was so made in the natures of Christ, that the humanity was absorbed and wholly turned into the divine nature; so that, by that transubstantiation, the human nature had no longer being. To oppose this heresy, the ancient fathers did very fitly make use of the sacramental union between the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ, and thereby shewed that the hu-

man nature of Christ is no more really converted into the Divinity, and so ceaseth to be the human nature, than the substance of the bread and wine is really converted into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, and thereby ceaseth to be both bread and wine. But by this union the human nature is so united with the Divinity, that each retains its own essential properties distinct. The properties of either nature are preserved entire. It is impossible that the majesty of the Divinity can receive any alteration; and it is as impossible that the meanness of the humanity can receive the impression of the Deity, so as to be changed into it, and a creature be metamorphosed into the Creator, and temporary flesh become eternal, and finite mount up into infinite. As the soul and the body are united, and make one person; yet the soul is not changed into the perfections of the body, nor the body into the perfections of the soul. There is a change indeed made in the humanity, by its being advanced to a more excellent union, but not in the Deity; as a change is made in the air when it is enlightened by the sun, not in the sun which communicates that brightness to the air. Athanasius makes the burning bush to be a type of Christ's incarnation; the fire signifying the divine nature, and the bush the human. The bush is a branch springing from the earth, and the fire descends from heaven. As the bush was united to the fire, yet was not hurt by the flame, nor converted into the fire, there remained a difference between the bush and the fire, yet the properties of fire shined in the bush, so that the whole bush seemed to be on fire: So in the incarnation of Christ, the human nature is not swallowed up by the divine, nor changed into it, nor confounded with it: but they are so united, that the properties of both remain firm: two are so become one, that they remain two still; one person in two natures, containing the glorious perfections of the Divinity, and the weakness of the humanity. The fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ.

3. Christ's becoming man implies the voluntariness of this act of his in assuming the human nature. When he was solacing himself in the bosom of the Father with the sweetest pleasures that heaven could afford, yet even then the very prospect of his incarnation afforded him unspeakable delight, Prov. viii. 31. 'Rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and my delights were the sons of men.' See what is said, Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8. 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.' And when he was in the world, and had endured many abuses and injuries from sinners, and con-

tradictions of them against himself, and was even come to the most difficult part of his work, yet even then he could say, 'How am I straitened (or pained) until it be accomplished!' Luke xii. 50. He longed to have the work of Redemption finished, for which he had assumed the human nature, that thereby he might be fitted and qualified for suffering. He cheerfully assumed our nature, that so he might be capable to suffer, and thereby satisfy offended justice for his people's sins. He was not forced or constrained to become man, but he willingly laid aside the robes of his Divinity, and cloathed himself with the infirmities of the flesh. Yea, if he had not willingly engaged to take on our nature, and die for our sins, divine justice could not have accepted of his blood as the price of our redemption.

III. I proceed to shew, that Christ was true man. Being the eternal Son of God, he became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul. He had the same human nature which is common to all men, sin only excepted. He is called in scripture 'man,' and 'the Son of man, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David,' &c; which designations could not have been given unto him, if he had not been true man. And it is said, Heb. ii. 14, 15, 16. 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' And so he became not an angel, but a man. As man consists of two essential parts, body and soul; so did Christ. He had a real body of flesh, blood, and bones, not a fantastical body, which is only a body in appearance. Hence he said to his affrighted disciples, when they thought they had seen a spirit when he first appeared to them after the resurrection, 'Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: Handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have,' Luke xxiv. 39. He was born with a body which was prepared for him, of the same appearance with those of other infants. He increased in stature, and grew up by degrees; and was so far from being sustained without the ordinary nourishment wherewith our bodies are preserved; that he was observed by his enemies to come eating and drinking; and when he did not so, he suffered hunger and thirst. The thorns that pricked the sacred temples of his head, the nails which penetrated through his hands and his feet, and the spear that pierced his blessed side, gave sufficient proof and testimony of the natural tenderness and frailty of his flesh.—The actions and pas-

sions of his life shew that he had true flesh. He was hungry, thirsty, weary, faint, &c. As therefore we believe that Christ came into the world, so we must own that he came in the verity of our human nature, even in true and proper flesh. With this determinate expression it was always necessary to acknowledge him. For 'every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God,' 1 John iv. 2, 3. This spirit appeared very early in the Christian church, in opposition to the apostolical doctrine: and Christ, who is both God and man, was as soon denied to be man as God. Simon Magus, the arch-heretic, first began, and many afterward followed him. And as Christ had a true body, so he had also a rational soul. For certainly, if the Son of God would stoop so low as to take upon him our frail flesh, he would not omit the nobler part, the soul, without which he could not be man. We are told that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, the one in respect of his body, the other in respect of his soul. Wisdom belongeth not to the flesh, nor can the knowledge of God, which is infinite, admit of an increase or addition. He then, whose knowledge did improve together with his years, must have a subject proper for, and capable of it, which was no other than a human soul. This was the seat of his finite understanding and directed will, distinct from the will of his Father, and consequently that of his divine nature, as appears by that known submission with respect to his drinking the cup of divine wrath; 'Not my will but thine be done,' says he. This was the subject of those affections and passions which so manifestly appeared in the course of his life, and particularly when he breathed forth that language, when entering upon his last sufferings, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.' This was it which on the cross, immediately before his departure, he committed to his Father's care, Luke xxiii. 46. 'Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit.' And as his death was nothing else but the separation of his soul from his body, so the life of Christ, as man, consisted in the vital union and conjunction of that soul with the body. So that he who was perfect God was also perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Which is to be observed, and asserted against the ancient heretics, who taught that Christ assumed human flesh; but the Word, or his Divinity, was unto that body in place of a soul. As he could not have been real man without a real body and reasonable soul, which are the two essential and constituent parts of man, so he could not have borne the punishment of his people's sins, if he had not suffered in both. They had forfeited both soul and body to divine jus-

tice, and should have suffered in both for ever in hell; and therefore Christ, when he substituted himself in their room, suffered both in his body and in his soul. The sufferings of his body were indeed very great; it was filled with exquisite torture and pain; but his soul sufferings were much greater, as I observed in a former discourse.

IV. I come now to shew what we are to understand by Christ's being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary. This is a great mystery, beyond the reach and comprehension of a finite mind. The conception of our blessed Saviour was miraculous and supernatural, above the methods of nature. To open this a little three things are to be considered here.

1. The framing of Christ's human nature in the womb of the virgin.

2. The sanctifying of it.

3. The personal union of the manhood with the Godhead.

First, Let us consider the framing of the human nature of Christ in the womb of the virgin Mary. In the text the act is expressed to be the effect of the infinite power of God. And it sets forth the supernatural manner of forming the humanity of our blessed Saviour. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*, and by an act of creative power frame the humanity of Christ, and unite it to the Divinity. In the framing of Christ's manhood, we are to consider the matter and the manner of it. The matter of his body was of the very flesh and blood of the virgin, otherwise he could not have been the Son of David, of Abraham, and Adam, according to the flesh. Indeed God might have created his body out of nothing, or have formed it of the dust of the ground, as he did the body of Adam, our original Progenitor: but had he been thus extraordinarily formed, and not propagated from Adam, though he had been a man like one of us, yet he would not have been of kin to us; because it would not have been a nature derived from Adam, the common parent of us all. It was therefore requisite to an affinity with us, not only that he should have the same human nature, but that it should flow from the same principle, and be propagated to him. And thus he is of the same nature that sinned, and so what he did and suffered may be imputed to us. Whereas, if he had been created as Adam was, it could not have been claimed in a legal and judicial way. Now, the Holy Ghost prepared the matter of Christ's body of the substance of the virgin; and he formed it of the matter thus prepared. Hence says Christ, 'A body hast thou prepared me,' Heb. x. 5. And says the apostle, Gal. iv. 4. 'God sent forth his Son made of a

woman.' The Holy Ghost sanctified that part of the virgin's substance whereof the body of Christ was to be formed, purging it from all sin and taint of impurity. For though a man cannot, yet God can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and endue it with a capacity for the generation of a human body, which otherwise it would not have had alone. Though Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin, yet we are not to think that he was made of the substance of the Holy Ghost, whose essence cannot be at all made. The Holy Ghost did not beget him by any communication of his essence; and therefore he is not the Father of Christ, though he was conceived by his power. The Holy Ghost did not minister any matter unto Christ from his own substance. Hence Basil says, Christ was conceived, not of the substance, but by the power, not by any generation, but by appointment and benediction of the Holy Ghost. And as for his soul, it was not derived from the soul of the virgin, as a part thereof; for spiritual substances are indivisible and impartible; and nothing can be cut off from them. But it was created and made of nothing by the divine power, as all other souls are. Hence God is called 'the Father of spirits,' Heb. xii. 9. and is said to 'form the spirit of man within him,' Zech. xii. 1. Here the forming of the soul of man is joined with these two glorious effects of God's creative power, the expansion of the heavens, and laying the foundations of the earth. Our Saviour's spirit was created by God, and infused into his body, when fitly organized to receive it. Again, the manner of framing the human nature of Christ is also to be considered; and that was extraordinary and miraculous, not by generation according to the ordinary and stated course of nature, but by an extraordinary operation of the Holy Ghost above the laws of nature: and for this cause it exceeds the compass of human reason, and the highest reach of created understandings, either to conceive or express the order and manner of his conception.

Secondly, Let us consider the sanctifying of Christ's human nature. I have already said, that that part of the flesh of the virgin, whereof the human nature of Christ was made, was purified and refined from all corruption by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, as a skilful workman separates the dross from the gold. Our Saviour was therefore called *that holy thing*, Luke i. 35. Now, this sanctification of the human nature of Christ was necessary.

1. To fit it for personal union with the Word, who, out of his infinite love, humbled himself to become flesh, and at the same time out of his infinite purity, could not defile himself by becoming sinful flesh.

2. With respect to the end of his incarnation, even the redemption and salvation of lost sinners; that as the first Adam was the fountain of our impurity, so the second Adam should also be the pure fountain of our righteousness. God 'sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh;' which he could not have condemned, had he been sent in sinful flesh. The Father 'made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;' which we could never have been made, if he had been tainted with any sin. He that needed redemption himself could never have purchased redemption for us.

Thirdly, We are to consider the personal union of the manhood with the Godhead. To clear this a little, you would know,

1. That when Christ assumed our nature, it was not united consubstantially, so as the three persons in the Godhead are united among themselves; they all have but one and the same nature and will: but in Christ there are two distinct natures and wills, though but one person.

2. They are not united physically, as the soul and body are united in a man: For death actually dissolves that union; but this is indissoluble. So that when his soul was expired, and his body interred, both soul and body were still united to the second person as much as ever.

3. Nor yet is this such a mystical union as is between Christ and believers. Indeed this is a glorious union. But though believers are said to be in Christ, and Christ in them, yet they are not one person with him.

But more positively, this assumption of which I speak is that whereby the second person in the glorious Godhead did take the human nature into a personal union with himself, by virtue whereof the manhood subsists in the second person, yet without confusion, as I shewed already, both making but one person Immanuel, God with us. So that though there be a twofold nature in Christ, yet not a double person. For the human nature of Christ never subsisted separately and distinctly by any personal subsistance of its own, as it doth in all other men; but from the first moment of conception subsisted in union with the second person of the adorable Trinity, in a miraculous and extraordinary manner, being supernaturally framed within the womb of the virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. Again, as it was produced miraculously, so it was assumed integrally; that is to say, Christ took a complete and perfect soul and body, with all and every faculty and member pertaining to it. And this was necessary, that thereby he might heal the whole na-

ture of the disease and leprosy of sin, which had seized upon and wofully infected every member and faculty of man. Christ assumed all, to sanctify all. He designed a perfect recovery by sanctifying us wholly in soul, body, and spirit: and therefore he assumed the whole in order to it. Again, he assumed our nature with all its sinless infirmities: therefore it is said of him, Heb. ii. 17. 'In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.' But here we are to distinguish between personal and natural infirmities. Personal infirmities are such as befal particular persons, from particular causes, as dumbness, deafness, blindness, lameness, leprosies, &c. Now, it was no way necessary that Christ should assume these; but the natural ones, such as hunger, thirst, weariness, sweating, bleeding, mortality, &c. These he was subject unto, which, though they are not in themselves formally and intrinsically sinful, yet they are the effects and consequents of sin. They are so many marks and stains that sin hath left of itself upon our natures; and upon that account Christ is said to 'be sent in the likeness of sinful flesh,' Rom. viii. 3. Again, the human nature is so united with the divine, that each nature still retains its own essential properties distinct. And this distinction is not, nor can be lost by that union. The humanity was indeed changed by a communication of excellent gifts from the divine nature; but not by being brought into an equality with it: for it was impossible that a creature should become equal to the Creator. He took upon him the form of a servant, but he lost not the form of God. He despoiled not himself of the perfections of the Deity, by taking upon him the humanity. The glory of his Divinity was not extinguished or diminished, though it was eclipsed and obscured under the vail of our humanity; but there was no more change in the hiding of it, than there is in the body of the sun, when he is shadowed by the interposition of a cloud. And this union of the two natures in Christ is an inseparable union; so that from the first moment thereof, there never was, nor to all eternity shall there ever be any separation of them.

Quest. But how did this union remain between them, when Christ's human soul and body were separated from each other upon the cross! *Ans.* Though the natural union between his soul and body was dissolved by death for a time, yet the hypostatical union between his divine and human nature remained as entire and firm as ever. For though his soul and body were divided from each other, yet neither of them were separated from the divine nature, but still subsisted as they did before, by the subsistence of the second person of the Trinity. And though Christ cried upon the cross with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' yet that did

not imply a dissolution of that union: for if that dereliction should signify a dissolution of the former union of his natures, the separation had been made in his life, and not at his death; for he made this dolorous complaint before he gave up the ghost. But these words infer no more, but that he was bereft of such joy and comfort from the Deity, as should allay and mitigate the bitterness of his present troubles. And therefore when our Saviour yielded up the ghost, he suffered only an external violence; and what was subject to such corporeal force did yield unto these dolorous impressions: and the imbecility and frailty of our nature being such, that life cannot subsist long in exqusite torments, the disposition of his body failed the soul, and the soul deserted his body. But because no power hath force against omnipotence, nor could any finite agent work upon the union made with the Word, therefore that did still remain entire, both as to the soul and to the body.

V. I now proceed to shew, why Christ was born of a virgin. That Christ was to be born of a virgin, was prophesied and foretold many ages before his incarnation, as Isa. vii. 14. 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.' Now, that the mother of Jesus was that virgin spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, is evident from the testimony of the evangelists, particularly Mat. i. 18, &c. It was not convenient that he should be born in the common order of father and mother; for if he had been so born, he would have been a natural son of Adam, and so represented by him in the covenant of works, and an heir of Adam's sin, as others are that are born by virtue of the blessing of marriage. By such a birth he had been polluted and defiled with sin: 'For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean;' Job xiv. 4. The Redeemer of the world behoved to be so born, as not to derive the stain of man's nature by his generation. For if he had been tainted with the least spot of our corruption, he had been incapable of being a Redeemer: he could never have redeemed others who stood in need of redemption himself. And although God by his almighty power, had perfectly sanctified an earthly father and mother and cleansed them from all original sin, that so the human nature might have been transmitted immaculate to him, as well as the Holy Ghost did purge that part of the flesh of the virgin of which the body of Christ was made, yet it was not convenient, that that person, who was God blessed for ever, as well as man, in partaking of our nature, should have a conception in the same manner with ours, but different from it, and in some measure conformable to the infinite dignity of his person; which could not have been, had not a supernatural and a divine person been concerned as an active principle in it. Besides, such a

birth had not been agreeable to the first promise, which calls him the seed of the woman, not of the man; and so the truth and veracity of God had suffered some detriment by it. The seed of the woman only is set in opposition to the seed of the serpent. By his being born of a virgin, the holiness of his nature is effectually secured. This exempted him from the stain and pollution of Adam's sin, which his nature wholly escaped, in that he received it not as all others do, in the way of ordinary generation, wherein original sin is propagated: but this being extraordinarily produced, was a most pure and holy thing. Christ was an extraordinary person, and another Adam; and therefore it was necessary he should be produced a new way. At first Adam was produced neither of man nor woman; Eve of a man without a woman; all others of a man and a woman. The fourth way remained, viz. of a woman without a man; and so Christ was born. And the wisdom of God appeared in that he was born of a virgin espoused; for thereby the reproach of illegitimacy was warded off; he had Joseph to take care of him in his infancy; his mother's good name and life were preserved from the malicious Jews; and our faith was the more confirmed by Joseph's testimony concerning Mary.

Thus we may be thoroughly satisfied,

1. That Christ had a true human body; and that though he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, he had not merely the likeness of flesh, but true flesh, Luke xxiv. 39. Heb. ii. 14.

2. That he had a reasonable soul, which was a created spirit, and that the divine nature was not instead of a soul to him. When he died, he commended his spirit to God, Luke xxiii. 46. There is in him a created and an uncreated understanding and will, Mark xiii. 32. Luke xxii. 42. Thus he was true man, consisting of soul and body. And the human nature being united to the divine, there were great gifts of holiness, wisdom, &c. in the human nature of Christ, by virtue of this union, which yet were not infinite, Luke ii. 52.

3. That Christ's body was not made of any substance sent down from heaven, but of the substance of the virgin, Gal. iv. 4. He was 'the seed of the woman,' Gen. iii. 15. and the fruit of Mary's womb, Luke i. 42. otherwise he had not been our brother.

4. That the Holy Ghost cannot be called the Father of Christ, since his human nature was formed, not of his substance, but of that of the virgin, by his power.

5. That though as to the nativity of Christ there was nothing as to the way of it extraordinary, but he was at the ordinary time brought forth as others, Luke ii. 22, 23. and that as a general truth,

'A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come,' John xvi. 21. yet he was born without sin, being *that holy thing*. He could not have been our Redeemer, had he not been so. Heb. vii. 26. Neither could he have sinned, seeing the human nature was put beyond that capacity, by its union with the divine; and whatsoever Christ did or could do was the action of that person who was God, and so free from sin.

6. That the reason why Christ was born without sin, and the sin of Adam did not reach him, was because he came not of Adam by ordinary generation, not by the blessing of marriage, but by a special promise after the fall.

I shall conclude all with some inferences.

1. Jesus Christ is the true Messiah promised to Adam as the seed of the woman, to Abraham as his seed, the Shiloh mentioned by Jacob on his death bed, the Prophet spoken of by Moses to be raised from among the children of Israel, the Son of David, and the Son to be born of a virgin.

2. Behold the wonderful love of God the Father, who was content to degrade and abase his dear Son, in order to bring about the salvation of sinners. How astonishing is it, that he should send his only-begotten Son to assume our nature, and bear that dreadful wrath and punishment that we deserved?

3. See here the wonderful love, and astonishing condescendency of the Son, to be born of a woman, in order that he might die in the room of sinners. O how low did he stoop and humble himself, in assuming human nature, with all its sinless infirmities, in being subject to his own law, exposed to all manner of injurious usage from wicked men, to the temptations of Satan, and at last suffering a shameful and ignominious death! What great love to sinners, and what unparalleled condescension was here!

4. See here the cure of our being conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. Christ was born of a woman for us, and he was born without sin for us, that the holiness of his nature might be imputed to us as a part of that righteousness which constitutes the condition of our justification before God. In him is a complete righteousness for our guilt, and a fountain for washing away our spiritual pollution.

5. Christ is sensibly touched with all the infirmities that attend our frail nature, and has pity and compassion upon his people under all their pressures and burdens. Hence the apostle says, Heb. ii. 17, 18. 'In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things partaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people:

for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' How comfortable is it to believers to consider, that he who is their great High Priest in heaven, is clothed with their nature, to capacitate and qualify him to have compassion on them in all their troubles and distresses.

6. Let this encourage sinners to come unto him, that they may be united unto him by faith, and so partake of the blessings of his purchase. Come and enter into a marriage-relation with him. Sin shall not stop the match, if ye be willing. He that could sanctify the virgin's substance to make it a sinless piece of flesh, can easily sanctify you. And he that united the human nature to his divine person, can also unite you to himself, so as ye shall never be separated from him.

OF CHRIST'S OFFICES IN GENERAL.

ZECH. vi. 13.—*Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a Priest upon his throne.*

HAVING shewn that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer of elect sinners, and that it was necessary he should be God and man in one person, to qualify him for his Mediatory undertaking, I come now to speak of the offices which Christ executes as our Redeemer, from the text now read.

In the 11th verse of this chapter, there is a typical action crowning Joshua the high priest with two crowns, which is applied and explained in the following verses as representing Christ in his offices, who has on his head many crowns. In the 12th verse, there is a prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, under the metaphor of a branch, as sprung from the family of David, and making but a mean appearance in the world, 'as a root out of a dry ground.' In the verse where our text lies, we have the offices which he was to execute as our Redeemer; which are three.

1. The office of a Prophet; *He shall build the temple of the Lord;* that is, his own church, whereof the temple was a type, by the word of the gospel, which it is his work to promulgate as a Prophet. For the church is 'built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,' and the revealer of those truths which the prophets and apostles taught.

2. The office of a Priest; namely to expiate the sins of his people to purchase peace for them, and to manage their cause with God.

3. That of a King; for he has *a throne*, which denotes his kingly office. He is a *Priest upon his throne*, denoting the reward of his sufferings, and the high dignity he is advanced to in consequence of his humiliation and satisfactory sufferings. And he is represented as *sitting on his throne*, not a King in name only, or an inactive monarch, but exercising acts of jurisdiction and government. In him all the glory of these offices is to meet: and these offices he shall hold and exercise in spite of all opposition: *He shall sit and rule upon his throne.*

The text affords foundation for the following doctrine, viz.

Doct. 'Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. The verity of these offices in Christ.

II. The necessity of his exercising them as our Redeemer.

III. When he did exercise these offices.

IV. *Lastly*, Deduce some inferences.

1. I am to shew the verity or reality of these offices in Christ. I say then, that Christ as our Redeemer is actually invested with these offices; he is truly a Prophet, a Priest, and a King; and also that he executes them, that is, performs the functions of, or what belongs to these offices. This clearly appears,

1. From plain scripture testimony, (1.) To his having or being possessed of these offices.—He is a Prophet, that Prophet foretold by Moses, who was to be heard in all things that he should say; and of whom it is said, 'That every soul that would not hear him, should be destroyed from among the people, Acts iii. 22, 23. which passage is applied to Jesus Christ by the apostle Peter, and can agree to none but him, who teacheth as never man taught, even with authority and power.—He is a Priest. So he is expressly called, Heb. v. 6. 'Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec;' and in several other places of that epistle, where the reality, nature, and end of his priesthood are largely described.—He is a King: Psal. ii. 6. 'Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.' Psal. cx. 2. 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.' He has all the ensigns of royal authority. The ceremony of inauguration or anointing to his office, Psal. ii. 6. Heb. 'I have anointed my King upon my holy hill of Zion;' a crown, Psal. xxi. 3; a sword, Psal. xlv. 3; a sceptre, Psal. lxv. 6; subjects, Luke i. 33. John i. 49. (2.) The scriptures bear witness to his executing these offices. Hence he says himself, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life,' John xiv. 6. He is *the way* to life and happiness by

his death; *the truth* in his word, the sum and substance of all revealed truth; and *the life* in his Spirit, quickening and preserving his people by his power. He 'of God is made unto *his people* wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption:' *wisdom* as a Prophet, *righteousness* as a Priest, and *sanctification and redemption* as a King.

2. We learn this also from his name *Christ*, or *Messiah*, which signifies *the anointed One*. I told you in a former discourse, that three sorts of persons used to be anointed under the law, viz. Prophets, 1 Kings xix. 16; priests, as Aaron, Exod. xxix. 7; and kings, as David and others. But all these offices meet in Christ, who was anointed for the execution of them. Hence he says himself, Isa. lxi. 1. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.' He is anointed to *preach good tidings unto the meek*, as a Prophet; to *bind up the broken-hearted*, as a Priest; and to *proclaim liberty*, as a King. He was not anointed with material oil, as the prophets, priests, and kings, under the Old Testament dispensation were, but with the oil of the Spirit; 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me (says he), because the Lord hath anointed me.' And God is said to have 'anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows,' Psal. xlv. 7. Now, this unction signified, (1.) His being set apart to the Mediatory work, and to these offices: the Father 'sanctified him, and sent him into the world,' John x. 36. (2.) His being fully furnished with gifts and qualifications suitable to these offices, in respect of his human nature, to which the Spirit was given, not by measure, Isa. xi. 1, 2. &c. but in fulness, not of sufficiency only, but abundance, not the fulness of a vessel, but of a fountain, in order to communicate liberally unto his people, John i. 16. He was solemnly inaugurated to these offices at his baptism, Mat. iii. 17. at his transfiguration, Mat. xvii. 5. and at his exaltation, Acts ii. 36. And he was as solemnly called to these offices, Heb. v. 4, 5. 'No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: so also, Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, 'Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

II. Let us next consider the necessity of his exercising these offices. Christ's incarnation and taking on him the work of our redemption was entirely voluntary, without the least shadow of coaction and compulsion; but seeing he was pleased out of his great kindness to us, to become our Redeemer, it was necessary for our

salvation that he should execute all these three offices. This will be clear, if we,

1. Consider our misery by sin, ignorance, guilt, and bondage. We were ignorant of the way of returning to God again; and therefore Christ as our Prophet must teach us. We durst not look him in the face, being covered with guilt? and therefore Christ as a Priest must make atonement, and remove our guilt. We were in bondage to sin and Satan, and could not return to God, nor recover ourselves out of our thraldom; therefore Christ as a King delivers us, brings us back again, leading captivity captive. As a Prophet he gives light to the blind, as a Priest he brings merit, and as a King power.

5. Consider the salvation which the elect were to be made partakers of. It behoved to be revealed unto them, seeing of themselves they could never discover it, being quite blind and ignorant; and therefore our Redeemer became a Prophet to reveal the things that concern our salvation unto us, and instruct us therein. It behoved to be purchased for sinners, who, being weak and unfit for any spiritual work, could never purchase it for themselves: therefore he became a Priest to purchase life and eternal redemption for us. It behoved to be applied by the power of his Spirit; for as sinners could not purchase salvation, far less could they apply it to themselves: therefore Christ became a King. The slaves could never have raised their ransom, nor known it after it was paid, far less before; and they were unwilling to come out of their bondage. And therefore it behoved our Redeemer to be invested with these three offices.

3. Consider Christ as Mediator of the covenant, who behoved to deal with both parties, in order to bring them together. God was offended with our sin and guilt; and therefore for us he behoved to be a Priest, to satisfy law and justice, and intercede for our pardon. We knew not what was in agitation between the Father and the Son; and therefore he behoved to be a revealer of that grace, and merciful contrivance. We were unwilling to deal with God; therefore he behoved, as a King, to bring us to submit and yield to his government. The benefits of the covenant he behoved to purchase, reveal, and administer.

4. Consider the work of conversion. The soul must be enlightened, by the conviction of the Prophet, to see its misery, and the suitableness of the remedy: upon the sight of its misery, the soul would despair, were not the blood of the Priest to sprinkle the conscience; and the will would never yield, if it felt not the power of his conquering sword.

5. Consider our daily necessities. Are we not every day in the dark about something? What should become of us, if we had not the great Prophet to go to for instruction and direction? We are every day contracting new guilt: what would be our case, if there were not a lasting merit and an abiding Advocate? Are we not always needing protection against our enemies? how then should we break through the armies of hell, if our King were not on our head, to subdue them under us?

6. *Lastly*, Consider the promises, which are the stay and staff of the Christian's life, without which they could never bear up. Christ's offices are the source and spring of all these. How precious are the promises of illumination, guidance, direction, &c. to the blind and those who know not the way? These flow from Christ's prophetical office. 'Behold, (says Jehovah), I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people,' Isa. lv. 4. How precious are promises of peace, pardon, and reconciliation, to those who are disquieted with fears, with guilt and sin? These flow from his Priestly office. And the promises of protection and deliverance to captives flow from his Kingly office. All the promises are the purchase of the blood of Christ; and they are all yea and amen in him, and flow from and through him.

III. I come now to shew, when Christ did execute these offices. As he was the Redeemer of the church in all ages, so did he execute these offices in all ages of the church. In the Old Testament he was the great Prophet of the church; for it is said, John i. 18. 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' He brought the glad tidings of salvation unto sinners in all the discoveries thereof from the first gospel-promise until his manifestation in the flesh. And he not only reveals the things concerning salvation unto men, but teaches them, and gives men an understanding to apprehend and know them. He was a Prophet unto the church in the wilderness: Hence it is said, Exod. xxiii. 20. 'Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice.' And we read, that 'by the Spirit he went and preached unto the spirits in prison,' 1 Pet. iii. 19. that is, unto the sinners in the old world, by the ministry of Noah, who, not repenting, were then, at the time the apostle wrote, in the prison of hell. He was also their Priest, interceding, on the ground of his future sufferings, for his people. Of this we have a remarkable instance, Zech. i. 12. 'O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem,

and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?' And he was their King, the Captain of the Lord's host, who led and conducted them, delivered them from the Egyptian bondage, guided them through the howling wilderness, placed them in Canaan, instituted their whole religious worship and service, &c.

But more especially Christ executed these offices after his incarnation, and that in his twofold estate of humiliation and exaltation. These are his two estates, of which the apostle speaks, Phil. ii. 8, 9. 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.'

He was a prophet while on earth, and still is revealing by his Word and Spirit the will of God for the salvation of his people. The whole doctrine of the Bible was taught by him; and it is by him that all saving knowledge is communicated to this day, and will be to the end of time.

He was a Priest in his state of humiliation, as well as he is in his state of exaltation. He offered his sacrifice on the earth, and therefore was a Priest there. Hence saith the apostle, Eph. v. 2. 'Christ —hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.' Nor did he ascend into heaven, till by his sacrifice he had 'purged away our sins,' Heb. i. 3. And he continues an interceding Priest for ever, Heb. vii. 25.

He was also a King in his state of humiliation. He was born a King, Matth. ii. 2. went into Jerusalem as a King, in accomplishment of an ancient prophecy concerning him, Matth. xxi. 5. owned himself to be a King before Pilate, Matth. xxvii. 11. It was the Lord of glory that was crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 8. And he is now exalted to his throne, and is styled, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords,' and will reign till all his enemies be made his footstool, and all his subjects be brought home to glory.

Here it may be observed, that these three offices, which Christ executes, are not to be divided, especially when they are executed in a way that is effectual for the salvation of the subjects thereof. He may indeed objectively reveal the will of God, and give laws to his church, as a Prophet, without giving them the unction whereby those who are savingly taught of God know all things necessary to salvation: and he may execute his regal office, as a Judge, in inflicting heavy judgments and calamities on his enemies, without subduing them to that obedience and subjection to him which is the privilege of real believers. Yet it is a certain truth, that wherever

he executes one of these offices in a saving way, he executes them all. In this respect, though the offices are distinct, yet they are not divided. For whosoever is taught by him as a Prophet, so as to be made wise unto salvation, is redeemed unto God by his blood as a Priest, and is subdued by his power as a King, and made a willing subject to him: and all whose sins are expiated by him as a Priest, shall, in his own time, be savingly taught by him as a Prophet, and made his willing subjects as a King, in the day of his power.

A few inferences shall shut up this subject.

1. How great and how glorious is our Lord Jesus Christ, who was meet to bear all these offices at once, and exercise them at once, so as one does not mar or clash with another! He is glorious indeed in whom all the glory scattered amongst the typical persons is perfectly concentered. If it was an honour to Melchizedec, to be both a priest and a king, and David to be both a king and a prophet; how much more glorious is it for our divine Mediator to be a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, really possessed of these offices, and exercising them in their full extent, in a more efficacious manner than any person that was ever invested with any of them on earth!

2. Let this commend Christ unto you as a full and a suitable Saviour. There is no case a poor sinner can be in, but he will find the remedy of it in these offices of Christ. Art thou, O sinner, under spiritual darkness and ignorance? There is knowledge and instruction to be had from him. He is the light of the world and can give thee an understanding to know him that is true, he can give thee the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Art thou under guilt and condemnation, laden with sin that is like to sink thee to hell? There is righteousness in him as a Priest to remove thy guilt. He is the atonement and propitiation for sin. He saves from sin and wrath. Art thou a slave to sin and Satan? He is a King, who came to destroy the works of the devil: he can break the dominion of sin in thee, knock off thy fetters, and subdue all thy spiritual enemies.

3. Ye cannot take Christ, as a Redeemer, if ye take him not in all his offices. He offers himself to sinners no other way. And what God has joined together let no man put asunder. Many pretend to take Christ as a Saviour to save them from hell and wrath, who do not hearken to him as a Prophet to teach them the saving knowledge of God, nor submit to his laws and commandments. How many call Christ their Lord, and yet do not the things that he saith? O the folly of the world, that reject Christ's teaching, saying, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways! O the stupidity of those who despise Christ as a Priest, and

think to recommend themselves to the divine favour by their own works of righteousness, which they substitute in the room of his righteousness! O the madness of those who contemn Christ as a King, refusing to submit to his royal authority, and who spurn at his laws and government! And how foolish are the princes of the earth that will not suffer Christ to reign freely in their dominions, but encroach on his authority, and make laws opposite to and inconsistent with his!

4. Do ye receive Christ in all his offices, giving up yourselves to be taught by him as a Prophet, in all things relating to your salvation, renouncing your own knowledge and wisdom; to be justified by his righteousness, and washed in his blood, renouncing all your own righteousness, as filthy rags, saying, 'in the Lord alone have I righteousness, and counting all things but loss and dung, that ye may win Christ, and be found in him, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith;' and to be guided and conducted, ruled and governed by him as your Sovereign Lord and King, yielding a hearty and cheerful obedience to all his laws and commandments, and saying, 'Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.'

5. Employ this mighty Redeemer in all the offices wherewith he is invested, and which as Mediator he exercises for the benefit of the ruined race of mankind. Ye have absolute need of him in all these offices. Ye are witless and foolish, and stand in need of his wisdom to guide and direct you; and ye are ignorant both of yourselves and of God, and so require saving knowledge and instruction. Ye are guilty and condemned sinners, nay, daily offenders, and so stand in need of pardon, nay, of continual pardons. Ye are weak, and have no strength to combat your spiritual adversaries, and so require the exertion of his mighty power as King of kings to cause you stand against your adversaries. If you knew yourselves, and were exercised to godliness, you would see the absolute necessity of all Christ's offices for your salvation, and would every day bless God for such a complete and all-sufficient Redeemer. O make use of him daily in all his glorious offices, and honour him by putting employment in his hand, as your Prophet, Priest, and King.

OF CHRIST'S PROPHETICAL OFFICE.

ACTS iii. 22.—*A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*

HAVING shewn that the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer, is invested with, and actually executes the offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King, I come now to speak of these offices distinctly; and shall begin with his prophetical office, which is plainly asserted in the words now read.

Here the apostle Peter shews the Jews, Moses pointing to Christ as the great Prophet of the church. Moses had told the Israelites in the wilderness, Deut. xviii. 15. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.' Peter tells the Jews, that this eminent Prophet was now come, and exhorts them to submit unto his instructions. In the words we have,

1. A description of Christ as to his prophetical office, *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you.* Where

1*st*, Christ is described by his title, *a Prophet*, and that the Prince of all the Prophets, or the 'great,' or 'chief Shepherd,' as he is styled by the apostles. It belongs to a prophet, by virtue of his office, to expound the law, declare the will of God, and foretel things which are to come. All these meet in Christ our great Prophet in a singular and eminent manner.

2*dly*, He is here described by his type; 'a Prophet like unto me,' says Moses; who therein typified and prefigured Christ. But you may say, is it not said of Moses, Deut. xxxiv. 10. 'There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.' I answer, It is true indeed of a mere man there never arose so great a prophet in Israel as Moses was, either in respect of his familiarity with God, or of the miracles which he wrought by the efficacy of the divine power. Moses, however, was but a servant, and Christ a Son: Moses was but a star to this Sun, and derived all his light and knowledge from him. All the prophets under the Old Testament, however eminent were but Stars, and borrowed all their light from the Sun of righteousness. Nevertheless there were several things wherein Christ was like to Moses; such as, Moses and Christ were both persecuted in their infancy, Moses was a deliverer from the temporal, but Christ from the spiritual Egypt, of which the former was a figure. But more particularly, Christ was like to Moses,

(1.) In this great intimacy and familiarity with God. It is said, Exod. xxxiii. 11. that 'the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.' He spake with Moses freely, familiarly, and immediately; not by an angel, in a dream or vision, as he did to other prophets. Now Christ was like Moses in this respect, and far excelled him in it; for he was intimate with God from all eternity, Prov. viii. 30; he was 'with God,' John i. 1. and lay in his bosom, knowing all his counsels and purposes.

(2.) Christ was like to Moses in the excellency of his ministration, and his great faithfulness in the discharge of it. It is said, Heb. iii. 2. 'He was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.' As the office of Moses extended to the whole house of God under the law, and to all the service of it; so did Christ's reach to the whole church of God, and to all the service of it under the gospel. As Moses was appointed of God to give out what he delivered; so was Christ appointed by his Father to institute what he did institute, and abrogate what he did abrogate. As Moses was faithful to him that appointed him in all the matters of God's house, keeping back nothing that he was commanded to reveal; so was Christ faithful to the Father, who did appoint him in like manner; yea, Christ far excelled Moses, as the apostle shews, Heb. iii. 3. 4. 'For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, in as much as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.'

(3.) Moses was a prophet that mediated between God and the people. He carried God's mind to them, and returned their mind to God, because they were not able to hear the voice of God immediately themselves, Deut. xviii. 16, 17. So Christ is a Mediator between God and man; he deals with God for man, and with man for God.

(4.) As Moses confirmed his doctrine by many miracles which he wrought in the presence of the people to their full conviction; so our great Prophet is like unto Moses in this also: for he wrought many mighty miracles in the view and face of the world, which could not be denied, and thereby confirmed the doctrine which he preached, and verified the divinity of his person and mission.

3*dly*, Christ is here described by his stock and lineage from which he sprung according to the flesh, 'A Prophet shall the Lord raise up of your brethren; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came,' says the apostle, Rom. ix. 5. He was an Israelite: and it is evident that he sprang from the tribe of Judah, Heb. vii. 14. He put great honour and dignity upon that people and nation by his nativity and descent from them.

2. There is a strict injunction given of obedience to this Prophet: 'Him shall ye hear in all things.' By *hearing*, in this place, we are to understand obedience: and this obedience is required to be given to this Prophet only, universally, and under great penalties. (1.) It is required to be given to him only; for so *him* in the text must be understood as exclusive of all others. It is true, we are commanded to obey the voice of his messengers and ministers, Heb. xiii. 17. but still it is Christ speaking by them to whom we are to pay our obedience. 'He that heareth you (says he), heareth me.' We are to obey them 'in the Lord,' i. e. commanding and forbidding in Christ's name and authority. (2.) This obedience must be given to him universally: 'Him shall ye hear in all things.' Whatever he enjoins must presently be complied with; his commands are to be obeyed, not disputed. It is true, a judgment of discretion is allowed to Christians, to judge whether it be the will of God or not. We must 'prove what is the holy, good, and acceptable will of the Lord,' Rom. xii. 2. And whenever his will is understood and known, we have no liberty to chuse, but must conform ourselves to it, be the duty commanded ever so difficult, or the sin forbidden ever so pleasing and tempting. (3.) This obedience is required under a very severe penalty, even no less than being cut off and destroyed from among the people, and of God's requiring it at our hands, Deut. xviii. 19. Acts iii. 22. 'I will require it of him;' i. e. revenge myself in the destruction of the disobedient. This obligation laid on men to obey the great Prophet, is not a prediction, more than the commands, 'Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery,' &c.

The doctrine natively arising from the text is,

Doct. 'Christ is a Prophet, and, as the Redeemer of his people, executes that office, in revealing to them, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for their salvation.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What is implied in Christ's revealing the will of God for our salvation.

II. What is that will of God that Christ reveals.

III. How he reveals this will of God.

IV. For what ends he reveals the will of God, and the necessity of this revelation in order to our salvation.

V. *Lastly*, Make some improvement.

1. I am to shew what is implied in Christ's revealing the will of God for our salvation, wherein Christ's prophetical work lies. It implies,

1. That as it is God's determined will and purpose that some of

mankind shall be saved, so he has laid down a certain way and method for their salvation, out of which none can be saved, and in which all that take it shall be saved.

2. That the discovery of this method of salvation was a secret of God that man could never have found out, John i. 18. It was a counsel in the breast of God, which, for man or angel, might for ever have lain hid.

3. That our Lord Jesus was intimately acquainted with this will of God, John i. 18. He was 'in the bosom of the Father.' He was privy to his eternal counsels, as being the eternal Son of God. And therefore he needed not be carried to heaven, to hear and learn from God what he was to teach ere he began to preach to the world, being 'God manifested in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. Neither did he ascend unto heaven oftener than once, and that only after he had suffered, Heb. ix. 12.

4. That unto Jesus Christ we owe the discovery and revelation of the divine will. He is the fountain of all that light which points out the way to salvation, Isa. lv. 4. 'I have given him, (says the Lord), for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.' He is that true pillar of cloud that guides to the heavenly Canaan; and no beams of saving light shine on the world but from him, John iii. 13. and in the face of Jesus, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

II. I proceed to shew what is that will of God that Christ as a Prophet reveals. It is the will of God for the salvation of sinners, and that the whole will of God in all things concerning their edification and salvation. It is 'the word of his grace which is able to build them up,' Acts xx. 32. It is 'written, that ye might believe, —and that believing ye might have life.'

This may be reduced to two heads.

1. Faith. Man was broken off from God and his favour and fellowship. 'It was the will of God, that man should come and be reunited to him in the way of believing in a slain Redeemer. This Christ has revealed in the gospel. Therein he has laid open the mystery of reconciliation, as laid down betwixt the Father and him from eternity, in all the parts thereof, and this by his word and Spirit to teach his own children.

2. Obedience. Man, as he could not, so he knew not how to serve acceptably. Christ has also fully discovered that point. And therefore we find him at his prophetical work, expounding the law, and vindicating it from the false glosses of the Pharisees, Matth. v. vi. vii. and every where not only shewing men what to do, but how to do it.

More particularly, as the will of God denotes all that God would

have us to know, believe, and do, in order to our salvation; and as there are some things to be known as the foundation of our faith, some things to be believed, and some things to be done in point of duty, as the fruits and effects of true saving faith; so these particulars being the objects of Christ's teaching, I shall mention a few of them very briefly.

1. Christ makes known to us our original state, that holy and happy condition in which man was made; of which I gave you a specimen in the discourse concerning the creation of man. Man was then a holy and happy creature, the peculiar favourite of heaven, and endued with choicer prerogatives than all the creatures in this lower world. It is necessary for us to know this, that we may not accuse God of that sin and disorder which now prevails in our constitution, and renders us objects of the divine abhorrence; and may be unwearied till we regain our forfeited felicity. This is a matter of pure revelation, and is accordingly taught us in the inspired volume.

2. Christ reveals to us our misery and wretchedness by the fall. This I also endeavoured to open up to you in the course of this work. Man, by sin, lost communion with God, fell under his wrath and curse, and is liable to temporal and eternal miseries. This miserable state, though also a matter of revelation, is well known to all the descendants of Adam, so that they feel it in their sad experience, and they have no need to be taught it. But Christ teaches his people this doctrine in a manner that the rest of the world are strangers to. And therefore,

3. Christ reveals to us our woful impotency and inability to help ourselves. This is the fatal consequence of the fall, and has been partly mentioned in the foregoing part of this work. 'O Israel, (says the Lord), thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help,' Hos. xiii. 9. which says, that though our ruin is of us, our help is not in us. Hence men in their natural state are said to be *without strength*, incapable to deliver themselves from the wretched state into which they are plunged by sin. Man is so deeply sunk in the horrible pit, that it passes the skill and ability of men or angels to pull him out. He cannot atone offended justice, or expiate his sin. This deplorable state of man is revealed in scripture, and savingly only to the elect, by the Saviour of sinners.

4. Christ reveals as a Prophet, that there is a way found out, and a method laid down in the adorable depths of divine wisdom, whereby poor sinners may be delivered from sin and wrath, and obtain eternal salvation. For this discovery we are indebted to divine revelation. Of this I have spoken under the covenant of grace.

And Christ, as a Prophet, teaches this article to his people so efficaciously, that they acquiesce in this method of salvation.

5. He reveals to us that he is a full and sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, Heb. vii. 25. So that his own people cordially embrace him as their only Saviour, and accept him as their sole Redeemer, looking for expiation of guilt, pardon of sin, and peace with God, only from and through him.

6. He teaches, that we must have union with him through faith, or else we can have no benefit by his blood, 1 John v. 12. 'He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life:' that is, he that is united to Christ is spiritually alive, and shall not come into condemnation; but he that is not united to him is still under the curse, and the wrath of God abideth on him. It is by being in Christ, united to him, that we escape condemnation, Rom. viii. 1.

7. Christ teaches us, that we must believe in, and receive him as our only Saviour and Redeemer, resting upon him alone for life and salvation. Hence it is said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'

8. Another part of the will of God that Christ reveals to us is *our sanctification;* and we are told, that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' Holiness of heart and life is absolutely to qualify men for the enjoyment of God in heaven, as no unclean thing can enter the celestial abode.

III. I come now to shew how Christ reveals this will of God for salvation, namely, by his word and Spirit, jointly or together; for both are absolutely necessary for attaining that end.

First, Christ reveals this by his word. This is the external revelation of it, without the knowledge of which no man can be saved. The personal Word of God teaches us by his word written or preached, or extraordinarily revealed. So there are three ways of Christ's teaching by his word.

1. The word extraordinarily revealed, as appears from Heb. i. 1. and Gen. iii. 15. which method having long ago ceased, we need not enlarge upon it.

2. By the word preached; which has been managed two ways, wherein the kindness of the Divine Teacher appears,

(1.) By his own personal preaching, Heb. i. 1. in the days of his flesh, when he went about the work of preaching the gospel to the Jews, for which cause he is called 'the minister of the circumcision,' Rom. xv. 8. putting a glory on the ministerial calling, by himself performing that office. He spake as never man spake. An hea-

venly authority and majesty appeared in his preaching, which attracted the attention of his hearers, and forced them to acknowledge that he was more than a human being.

(2.) By his ambassadors in his name. So he exercised his prophetical office.

[1.] Before his incarnation, under the Old Testament, 1 Pet. iii. 19. instructing his church sometimes by extraordinary teachers, the prophets; sometimes by ordinary teachers, or both. And this he did both before and after the word was written: for although before the scripture the church was supplied by extraordinary revelation, yet all were not so taught, but many were trained up by the external teaching of the patriarchs; as appears from Abraham's practice, Gen. xviii. 17, 19.

[2.] After his incarnation, by the apostles, who are infallibly guided, and to this day by ordinary ministers, by whom Christ still exercises his prophetical office, Eph. iv. 11. and so he promised to be with them, Mat. xxviii. ult. In this respect they have that awful hedge set about them, 'He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.' On this ground he obligeth people to repair to them for clearing, from the word, the matters of salvation, sin, and duty to them, Mal. ii. 7. 'They should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.'

3. By the word written, John xx. 31. 'These things are written, that ye might believe,' &c. Thereby it is that the prophets and apostles, and all the inspired writers, being dead, yet speak to us, and Christ by them, to shew us the will of God for our salvation. Thus was the church taught from the days of Moses, and in this manner it is taught to this day. We need not say, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' or 'who shall descend into the depths?' that is, for the revelation of the method of salvation. The word is nigh to us, it is among our hands. To that, Christ sends us to know his mind, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony; yet not to justle out men's teaching from it, Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Yet the word itself is not sufficient to teach us the will of God for our salvation. Not the word preached; for even most of those who heard him that spake as never man spake, were not bettered by his preaching; as appears from John xii. 37, 38. 'But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, 'Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' Nor yet the word written, for the same reason; nor that extraordinarily revealed, as in the case of Balaam. See 1 Cor. ii. 14. 'The natural man receiveth

.not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' There is a darkness over the minds of men which nothing but omnipotency can remove. Therefore,

Secondly, Christ teaches his elect, who are taught to salvation by his Spirit, who joins internal illumination to external revelation. 'He opened the understandings' of the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, 'that they might understand the scriptures,' Luke xxiv. 45. Thus all the elect are taught of God, and so come to Christ; and thus have they always been taught. Ye must not, however, understand these as two different ways of Christ's teaching to salvation, in those that are capable of both; for the word is that by which the Spirit teacheth still. These God has joined, Isa. lix. 21. 'As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.' John xvi. 13, 14. 'When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.' Thus the teaching of the elect is begun, and thus it continues to the end.

Indeed the word hath a mighty power and efficacy upon the hearts of men. It enlightens their mind, awakens their consciences, convinces of sin, and can effectually convert and change them. But this is only when it is managed by the Spirit's hand. All its power and efficacy is from him. The virtue of the word is not from itself: it doth not work in a physical way, as natural agents do, for then the effect would naturally follow, unless it were miraculously hindered. But this spiritual efficacy is in the word, as the healing virtue was in the pool of Bethesda, of which it is said, John v. 4. 'An angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.' This efficacious power is not naturally inherent in the word at all times, but only communicated to it at some special seasons. Many times the word is purely and plainly preached, but no gracious effect follows. It proves but like the beating of the air, which makes no impression upon it: none are awakened, convinced, or converted by it. Neither is the power of the word communicated to it by the instrument that manageth it: for saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 7. 'Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God

that giveth the increase.' Ministers are nothing, they have no power or strength of their own sufficient for such a purpose as this is. The apostle doth not mean here, that they are useless instruments, and altogether unnecessary, but that they are insufficient of themselves, to produce such mighty effects. It worketh not as it is the word of man, but as it is the word of God. Ministers may say of the ordinary, as Peter said of the extraordinary effects of the Spirit, Acts iii. 12. 'Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk!' All the power and efficacy of the word is derived from the Spirit of the Lord. It is said, 1 Thess. ii. 13. 'When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' When the word of God is set home by the Spirit, then it is mighty to enlighten the minds, convince the consciences, and humble and break the hearts of sinners. Then it proves as a hammer to break the rock in pieces. And it is said, John xvi. 8. 'When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' The word made use of there signifies conviction by such clear demonstration as compelleth assent. It not only convinceth men in general that they are sinners, but it convinceth them particularly of their own sins, and of all the heinous aggravations of them. It sets sin before the eye of conscience in all its aggravating circumstances and fearful consequences, as committed against the holy and righteous law of God, clear light, regrets and checks of conscience, manifold mercies and favours, God's long suffering, Christ's precious blood, many warnings of judgments, the reward and wages whereof, by the verdict of a man's own conscience, is death, even eternal death and damnation.

It may not be improper here to touch at the excellency of Christ's teaching, and shew you that it far transcends the teaching of all others.

1. He teacheth plainly and perspicuously. When he was upon earth, and preached the gospel unto men, he taught them by parables and similitudes, he clothed sublime and spiritual mysteries with earthly metaphors, and thereby adapted them to the low and dull capacities of men, and spake so familiarly about them, as if he had been speaking earthly things. And, according to his own example, he would have his ministers to preach, 'using great plainness of speech,' as the apostle Paul tells us he did, 2 Cor. iii. 12. and 'by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God,' 2 Cor. iv. 2. Yet he does not

allow them to be rude and careless in their expressions, pouring out rude, indigested, mean, sordid, and methodical words, nauseous and ungrateful to the ears of men. No; a holy, serious, and grave expression suits the lips of Christ's ambassadors. And what man ever spake more weightily, logically, and persuasively, than the apostle Paul, by whose pen Christ hath admonished us to beware of vain ostentation, and swelling words of vanity; but he would have us stoop to the understanding of the meanest, and not to give the people a comment darker than the text. He would have us rather to prick their consciences than tickle their fancies, and break their hearts rather than please their ears. Christ was a very plain preacher, and he not only opened truths to the understanding, but opened the understanding also to perceive them. He takes away the vail from the heart, and causes a heavenly light to shine into the soul, and darts a clear beam from heaven into the mind. Christ's teachings are fully satisfying. The soul doubts no more, staggers or hesitates no more; but fully acquiesces in what Christ teaches. It is so well satisfied therewith, that it can venture all upon the truth of what it hath learned from him.' You may see what is said with respect to this, Prov. viii. 8, 9. 'All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.'

2. Christ teaches fully. He gives us a full and clear revelation of the will of God with respect to all things which concern our happiness, either in this life or in that which is to come. That is spoken of Christ which we have, Psal. xl. 9, 10. 'I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness, and thy truth from the great congregation.' He hath given us a perfect rule of faith and obedience, in nothing defective or superfluous, but comprehending the whole duty of man. The scriptures contain the counsels of God, which he hath graciously sent to redress the miseries of the fall; and therefore it is said by the apostle, Acts xx. 27. 'I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.' He hath kept nothing back from men that was needful to be known in order to their salvation. Hence saith he, John xv. 15. 'All things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you.' And it is said, 2 Tim. iii. 15. that 'the holy scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation.' Christ hath plainly shewed us what course we are to take, that so we may obtain the friendship and

favour of God here, and come to the enjoyment of him for ever hereafter. You may see what David says, Psal. cxix. 97. 'O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.' Christ by his word gives us a full discovery of our duty in every state and condition that we can be in while here in the world; and our relative duties are fully revealed. See what is said by the apostle, Tit. ii. 11, 12. 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.'

3. Christ teaches the will of God purely. His doctrine has not the least dash of error mixed with it to allay and debase it. His malicious enemies, who were continually lying at the catch, and most observant of his words and actions, could find nothing to charge him with. He preached the gospel most purely unto men. He is the true and faithful witness, Rev. i. 5. And he hath commanded his ministers to preserve the simplicity and purity of the gospel, and not to mix and sophisticate it. Hence it is said, 2 Cor. iv. 2. 'We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' And says Paul, 2 Cor. ii. 17. 'We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.' Here the apostle vindicates himself from the practice of false apostles and corrupt teachers, who adulterated the word, and mingled their own errors and inventions with it, and studied to please men more than God, to advance their own temporal interests thereby, more than the salvation and eternal interests of men's souls.

4. He teaches the mind of God in a most sweet and affectionate manner. His words make men's hearts to glow and burn within them, as it was with the two disciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 32. It was prophesied concerning him of old, that 'he should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street,' Isa. xlii. 2. 'The Lord hath given him the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.' Isa. l. 4. How sweetly did his words slide into the hearts of his hearers? He drew them with the bands of love, and with the cords of a man. See how affectionately he speaks, Matth. xi. 28. 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' He discouraged none, nor upbraided any from coming to him. He assured them, that all who were willing to come should

be heartily welcome, and meet with a gracious reception. His great familiarity and free condescension to the most vile and despicable sinners were often made the matter of his reproach. Such is his gentle and sweet carriage towards his people, that the church is called the Lamb's wife, Rev. xix. 7.

5. He teaches the will of God powerfully. It was observed by the multitudes that flocked about him, that he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes, Matth. vii. 29. They were but dull and coldrife preachers; their words did freeze as it were between their lips: but Christ spoke with a divine efficacy and power. There was heat as well as light in his doctrine. And so is there still, though it be declared by the mouths of poor, weak, and despised men. Hence says the apostle, 2 Cor. x. 4. 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds,' &c. It is still 'quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,' Heb. iv. 14. The holy apostle imitated his great master Christ: being filled with his Spirit, he spake freely and home to the hearts of men. His words made the consciences of sinners to shake and tremble in their breasts. It is true, all faithful and able ministers are not alike gifted in this particular; but yet there is a holy seriousness, a spiritual grace and majesty in their doctrine, commanding reverence and regard from their hearers.

6. Christ teaches the will of God infallibly. The wisest and best of men may mistake, and lead others into the same mistakes with themselves: but it is not so in the teachings of Christ; for they are not subject to error and mistake. His Spirit guideth men into all truth, and into nothing but the truth, John xvi. 13. He is an unerring guide, and a shepherd that will not suffer his sheep to stray and wander to their eternal destruction upon the mountains of sin and vanity. All who are taught of Christ shall certainly arrive at celestial glory: for he hath said, John x. 28. 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' His word is abundantly sufficient to make men wise unto salvation. And saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 16. 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.'

7. The teachings of Christ are abiding teachings. They make deep and indelible impressions upon the soul, which can never wear out. The words of men evanish like smoke, and fly away: but the words of Christ stick close by us. What he teacheth he writeth

upon the heart. So it is promised, Jer. xxxi. 33. 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' It is usual with gracious souls, whose understandings have been savingly opened by the Lord, to say many times afterwards, I shall never forget such a scripture that once convinced me, and such a promise that once encouraged and comforted me. To this purpose it is said by David, Psalm. cxix. 93. 'I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me.'

8. Christ teaches men the will of God in a saving manner. They are all made wise to salvation who are taught by him. See what the apostle Paul says of the holy scriptures, which contain this divine revelation, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. 'The holy scriptures are able to make one wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' There is a great deal of other knowledge that goes to hell with men. The pavement of that infernal furnace, as one speaks, is pitched with the sculls of many great scholars. Many who have learned heads, have graceless hearts. But life eternal lies in the teaching of Christ. Hence says our Saviour, John xvii. 3. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' This is deservedly called 'the light of life,' John viii. 12. And 'in this light' men 'clearly see light,' Psal. xxxvi. 9.

You see then, from what hath been said on this head, that Christ's teachings far transcend the teachings of all others; so that it may be justly said of him, as was said by his hearers of old, 'Never man spake like this man.'

IV. I now proceed to shew for what ends Christ as a Prophet reveals the will of God; where I shall touch at the necessity of this revelation in order to salvation.

The end of this revelation is for our salvation. Man by nature is ignorant of true happiness, and of the way that leads to it. But 'the grace of God, that bringeth salvation.' i. e. the glorious gospel of Christ, 'hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' The great design of the gospel-revelation is to shew what course we must steer that so we may escape deserved wrath and misery, and arrive at everlasting happiness and glory. So that now we need not cry out like those of old, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of

rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' Micah vi. 6, 7.

But here it may be inquired, Is not the light of nature sufficient to inform us of the way of salvation?

To this I answer in the negative. This revelation of the will of God which we have by Christ, was needful to be superadded to that, by reason of our natural darkness and blindness of mind. Men by nature know not God; their understandings are darkened through the ignorance that is in them. The whole world is involved in darkness. Though the light of nature tells us that there is a God, and that it is our duty to worship and serve him, yet it cannot teach us how we are to do it, so as to be accepted of him; as is clear in the case of the heathens, of whom it is said, Rom. i. 23. 'They changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' They debased the adorable Deity, by entertaining unworthy conceptions of him, and performing such acts of worship to him, as were not fit for a rational nature to offer, nor for the holy and glorious Majesty of heaven to receive. Besides, they ascribed his honour and attributes to the creatures; not only to the sun, moon, and stars, and to invisible powers which they supposed governed and ruled these shining luminaries, but even to the most despicable things in nature. Birds, and beasts, and creeping things, were the objects of their adoration. Again, though the light of nature directs us to many excellent moral duties, as to honour our parents, to do to others as we would have them to deal with us, &c. yet it cannot teach us to perform these duties in an acceptable manner. The apostle tells us, that 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.' The mind of man by nature hath not only a native blindness, by reason of which it cannot discern the things of the Spirit, but also a natural enmity that it hates the light; so that till the mind be healed and enlightened by Christ, the natural faculty can no more discern the things of the Spirit, than the sensitive faculty can discern the things of reason. It is as easy for men to read the law in tables of stone, after they are pounded and crumbled to dust, as to read true notions in lapsed and corrupt nature. This is excellently described by the apostle Paul, Eph. iv. 17, 18. 'This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.' Here he terms it 'vanity of mind,

darkness in the understanding, and blindness of heart.' All the essential faculties of the rational soul are entirely corrupted; the mind which is the repository of principles, that noble faculty, whereby we judge of things good and evil; the understanding, that discorsive faculty, whereby we collect one thing from another, framing conclusions from the principles of the mind, and reducing these principles into practical dictates; and the heart, i. e. the will, conscience, and affections, which were to apply these principles, and draw out these reasonings on the stage of life; all are corrupted. And the most ingenious nations for natural knowledge and civil prudence verify the apostle's character in their brutish actions. The Egyptians, who were men famous for wisdom and learning, and propagated the sciences to the other parts of the world, were worse than beasts in their worship. The Greeks, who counted their Athens the eye of the world, were not more refined, when they adored thirty thousand gods, and some of them infamous for murder and adultery, and held three hundred and twenty-four different opinions about the chief good, as learned men tell us. And the Romans, though eminent for civil prudence, were not much behind them, when they worshipped a fever, and dignified a strumpet with the title of the Goddess of Flowers. And a great philosopher among them takes notice of their ignorance of God in the various notions which they have of him. Even those among the heathens who for acts of justice and temperance might justly put many men under the gospel to the blush, have had a thick darkness upon their minds in regard of God. But here more particularly I shall shew you several things absolutely necessary to be known in order to salvation, wherein the light of nature is very defective.—As,

1. The fall of man, which is the first cause and original spring of all our misery and woe. This is what the human understanding could never find out by its most accurate search and inquiries. For though the heathen philosophers were abundantly sensible of many confusions and disorders in their souls, and of their woful subjection to the rage and tyranny of unruly passions, yet they could never find out the fatal cause, nor trace those streams to the true original. They found indeed that something was amiss, and much amiss too; but from whence this disorder did arise, nature itself is wholly ignorant, and hath not so much as a regular guess without revelation. And though Plato seems to have had some dark notices of man's original and fallen state, when he expresses the one under the symbolic image of the golden age under Saturn's reign, and the other by the miserable iron image under the reign of Jupiter, in which he lived; yet we may warrantably conclude, that he had these disco-

veries from the scriptures of Jewish tradition. Origin is of opinion, that Plato understood the history of man's fall by his conversation with the Jews in Egypt. This first cause of all our misery is only made known by the scriptures. Men by nature know not the fall of Adam, which is the source and bitter root from which all their woe and trouble springs. And the light of nature is too dim and weak-sighted to pierce into the depths of Iniquity. It cannot acquaint us with the fumes of sin, and with that inward strength and power of it, which gives birth and nourishment to all those irregular actions which flow from it. There was therefore a necessity of some other light to penetrate the clouds of nature, and search into the depths of the belly, and bring to view that habitual disconformity of our natures to that rectitude required of us, and which was once possessed by us.

2. The light of nature cannot acquaint us with the true and adequate object of our religious worship, namely a Trinity of persons in the glorious Godhead. This sacred doctrine is wholly supernatural, and entirely beyond the reach of the human understanding. The most illuminated Philosophers that ever were in the world, though they found out the causes of many things, and could discourse to excellent purpose concerning the magnitude, motions, and influences of the stars, and the nature of plants and minerals, and many other things which are vailed from vulgar minds, yet they could never by their most accurate search and enquiry find out the mystery of the Trinity. This grand article of the Christian faith was altogether hid and unknown to them. We find indeed that some of the ancient philosophers had some dark and imperfect traditions concerning the Trinity. Hence some think, that that great Oriental maxim which Pythagoras brought with him into Greece, touching God, viz. that he was *hen kai polu*, that is, one and many, was but some broken Jewish tradition of the Trinity. And the Platonists had also some weak and corrupt traditions of three *hypostases*, or persons, which they called *Trinity*. But these and the like poor notices of the Trinity, it is most probable, Pythagoras first, and Plato after him, derived originally from the Jews, if not immediately, yet mediately by the Phœnicians and Egyptians. But yet neither the Grecian, Egyptian, nor Phœnician philosophers, had any sound and true notion of this great mystery; as will appear clear and evident to any sober mind, that considers what a world of fables and contradictions they mixed with those broken discoveries which they had received concerning it. Plato himself ingenuously confesses this, when he said, that he had received many mysteries from the ancients which he did not understand, but expected some

interpreter to unfold them unto him. But we find the gospel sets this mystery in a clear light. See Mat. iii. 17, 18. 1 John v. 7. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. all of which, and other scriptures, were considered when I discoursed on the doctrine of the Trinity. The gospel gives us a clear discovery of the persons in the Godhead, as to their nature and operations, and their combined and distinct acts and expressions of goodness. We find they all concur in the work of man's redemption: the Father contrived it, the Son purchased it, and the Holy Ghost applies it.

3. The light of nature cannot inform us of the way and method of our recovery by Christ. The whole scheme of this amazing work of redemption, was without the compass of our most searching faculties. There are three things with respect to this, which I shall touch at a little; and we had never known any of them unless they had been revealed. As,

(1.) The mystery of eternal election. From all eternity God foresaw that man should fall, and thereby plunge himself into an abyss of sin and misery, and that it would not be possible to recover himself out of it, neither could he receive help from any creature in heaven or earth; and God not intending that the whole race of man should perish, and become the eternal trophies of hell, set apart a certain number in his eternal purpose and decree, whom he designed to make vessels of mercy, and bring to the fruition of endless glory, to the everlasting praise of the invincible efficacy of his sovereign grace and rich mercy in Christ. So the apostle teaches us, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. upon which passage I formerly discoursed in the course of this work. This is indeed a profound mystery, which could never have been discovered by the clearest sighted reason: but the great Prophet of the church hath revealed it unto us.

(2.) We had never known the astonishing method of redemption, by which the elect are brought into a state of salvation, unless it had been revealed: How that God from all eternity entered into a covenant with his own Son, promising him assistance, a numerous seed, and great dignity and glory, if he would undertake the work of redemption, and free the elect from sin and wrath; whereupon Christ cheerfully condescended, and engaged to become the Sinner's Surety, to pay the debt: he was content to stand in his people's room, and submit himself to the avenging strokes of justice: he was willing to become a curse, that they might receive a blessing; to become poor, that they might be made rich; to be accused and condemned, that they might be justified; and to endure the shock of his Father's wrath, that they might go free. Hence he is brought in by the Psalmist offering himself as Surety in their stead, Psal.

xl. 6, 7. 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me.' He willingly yielded to all the conditions which were required for the accomplishment of that great and difficult work. He was content to take a body, that he might be capable to suffer. The debt could not be paid, nor the articles of the covenant performed, but in the human nature. He was therefore to have a nature capable of and prepared for sufferings. Hence it is said, Heb. x. 5. 'A body hast thou prepared me.' He behoved to have a body to suffer that which was represented by those legal sacrifices wherein God took no pleasure. And he took a body of flesh, surrounded with all the infirmities of our fallen nature, sin only excepted. The incarnation of Christ is a great mystery, which could never have entered into the thoughts either of angels or men, unless it had been brought to light by the gospel. Hence says the apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh,' &c. But of this I spoke at large when treating of the incarnation of our Redeemer.

(3.) The light of nature could never tell us, that it is by faith in Christ that we must be saved. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 16. He is set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. It is only through faith in Christ that the elect can be saved. All that believe in him are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. We are commanded to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall have everlasting life. Now, this way of salvation is above the strain and reach of natural reason to attain to the knowledge of it. There are some seminal sparks of the law in the hearts of men by nature; some common principles of piety, justice, and charity, without which the world would soon disband, and fall into confusion. But there is not the least conjecture of the contrivance of the gospel. It could never have entered into the thoughts of the Israelites, that by looking to a brazen serpent erected on a pole, the wounds should be healed which they received by the bitings of the fiery serpents. And as little could guilty man find out a way to satisfy divine justice by the death and sufferings of a Mediator, and to heal the wounded spirit by believing on Christ crucified. The most active and inquiring reason could never have thought of the wonders of the incarnation, and that a virgin should conceive, and a God be born. Nor could it have dreamed of the death and sufferings of the Prince of

life, and of the resurrection and ascension of the Lord of glory. Now, the human understanding, as bright and clear as it is corrupt, yet it could not, by all the help of argumentation and reasoning, arrive at the knowledge of it. Supernatural revelation was absolutely necessary to discover it to the holy angels. The apostle tells us, Eph. iii. 10. 'Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' This was a mystery locked up in the breast of God, of which the angels seem to have had no thoughts, till the revelation of it was made to the church. And even since that discovery, these wise and intelligent beings have not a perfect knowledge of the whole of the gospel-state; for they are still making further enquiries: 'Which things,' says the apostle, 'the angels desire to look into,' 1 Pet. i. 12.

4. The light of nature does not inform men of the evil there is in the first inclinations to sin. The heathen philosophers allowed the disorder of the sensitive appetite to be innocent and harmless, till it pass to the supreme part of the soul, and induces it to deliberate or resolve upon moral actions. For they were ignorant of that original and intimate pollution that cleaves to human nature. And because our faculties are natural, they thought that the first motions to forbidden objects were natural desires, and not the irregularities of lust. Accordingly all their precepts reach no further than the counsels of the heart; but the desires and motions of the lower faculties, though very culpable, are left by them indifferent. So that it is quite evident, that there are many stains and defilements in their purgative virtues. The law of God requires holiness and purity in all the habits and dispositions of the soul, an entire conformity to the will of God in all its various motions and actings; or else we can never be happy: for the scripture tells us, that he must have clean hands and a pure heart, that would ascend into the hill of God, and stand in his holy place; and that it is only the pure in heart that shall see God.

5. The light of nature and philosophy, improved to the highest height, is very defective in respect of piety, and in many things contrary to it; as will appear from the following particulars.

(1.) By delivering unworthy notions and conceptions of the Deity. Not only the vulgar heathens changed the truth of God into a lie, when they measured his immense and incomprehensible perfections by the narrow compass of their shallow imaginations: but the most renowned philosophers among them highly dishonoured God by their base and unbecoming apprehensions of him. For the true notion of God signifies a being infinite, independent, the universal

Creator and powerful Preserver of heaven and earth, and the absolute Director of all events; that his providence superintends and takes notice of all the motions and actions of his creatures; and that he is a liberal rewarder of those that seek him, and a just revenger of those that violate his holy and righteous laws. Now, all this was contradicted by some of them. Some asserted the world to be eternal, and others that matter was so, and in that denied him to be the first cause of all things. Some limited his being, confining him to one of the poles of heaven? others extended it only to the amplitude of the world. The Epicureans totally denied his governing providence, and made him an idle spectator of things here below. They maintained and asserted, that God was contented with his own majesty and glory; and that whatever was without him, was neither in his thoughts nor care; as if to be employed in the various accidents of the world were inconsistent with his own felicity. Thus, by confining his power who is infinite, they denied him in confessing him. There were others who allowed him to regard the great affairs of kingdoms and nations, and to manage crowns, and sceptres, and matters of state: but to stoop so low as to regard particular things, they judged to be as unbecoming the divine nature, as for the sun to descend from the firmament to light a candle for a servant in the dark. They took the sceptre out of God's hand, and set up a foolish and blind power to dispose of all mutable things. Some again made him a servant to nature, that he necessarily turned the spheres. Others subjected him to an invincible destiny, that he could not do what he desired. And thus the wisest of the heathens dishonoured the Deity by their false imaginations of him; and, instead of representing him with his proper attributes, drew a picture of themselves.

(2.) Philosophy and Nature's light is very defective as to piety, in not injoining the love of God. The first and great command of the law is this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and strength.' Yet these philosophers speak little or nothing of this, which is the principal part of natural religion. Aristotle, for as clear-sighted as he was in other things, yet when he discourses of God, is not only affectedly obscure to conceal his ignorance, but even in his morals, where he had reason to consider the Deity as an object most worthy of our love and obedience in an infinite degree, he totally omits such a representation of him, though the love of God is that alone which gives value and price to all other virtues. And this is the reason why philosophy is so defective as to rules for preparing men for an intimate and delightful communion with God, which is the effect of holy and perfect love,

and the supreme happiness of the reasonable nature. And if, in the Platonic philosophy there are some things directing to this, yet they are but coldly expressed, and so dark and obscure, that, like inscriptions on ancient medals or marbles which are defaced, they are hardly legible. It is the singular character of the gospel, which distinguishes it from all human institutions, that it represents the infinite amiableness of God and his beauty and goodness to us, to excite and draw out our affections to him in a superlative manner. It commands us to follow him as dear children, and presses us to seek for those gracious dispositions which may qualify us for the enjoyment of him in a way of friendship and love.

(3.) The best philosophers laid down this servile and pernicious maxim, That a wise man should always conform to the religion of his country. Socrates, who acknowledged one supreme God, yet advised his friends to comply with the common idolatry, without any difference in the outward worship of him and creatures: and those who did otherwise he branded as superstitious and vain. And his own practice was according to this advice which he had given; for he frequented the temples, and assisted at the sacrifices, which he declared before his judges, to purge himself of the crime of which he was accused. And Seneca, speaking of the Heathen worship, acknowledges that it was unreasonable, and only the multitude of fools made it excusable: yet he would have a philosopher to conform to these customs, in obedience to the law, not as pleasing to the gods. Thus they made religion a dependant on the state. They performed the rights of Heathenish superstition, that were either filthy, fantastical, or cruel, such as the devil, the master of these ceremonies, ordained. They became less than men by worshipping the most vile and despicable creatures: and therefore God gave them up to the vilest lusts, carnal impurity being a just punishment of spiritual. Rom. i. 23, 24.

(4.) Philosophy is very defective in not propounding the glory of God as the chief and ultimate end to which all our actions should refer. Now, the philosophers had other views and designs than this, in their precepts and dictates. As,

[1.] To make use of virtue as a means to gain honour and reputation in the world. This was plainly discovered in their books and actions. They were sick of self-love, and did many things to satisfy the eye. They led their lives as in a scene, where one person is within, and another is represented without, by an artificial imitation of what is true. They were swelled with presumption in having little merit, and a great deal of vanity. Now, this respect which men have to the opinion of others, corrupts the intention and

vitiates the action. It is not sincere virtue, but a superficial appearance, that is regarded; for it is sufficient to that purpose to seem to be virtuous without being so. And from hence he may discover that many of their most specious actions were but disguised sins; their virtues were as false as their deities. Or,

[2.] The end of philosophy was to prevent the many mischiefs which licentiousness and disorders might bring upon men from without, or to preserve peace and tranquillity within, by suppressing the turbulent passions arising from lust or rage, which trouble and discompose the mind. This was the pretended design of Epicurus, to whom virtue was amiable only as the instrument of pleasure. Or,

[3.] The highest design of philosophy was to propound and expose to view the beauty of virtue, and its charming aspect, as the most worthy motive to draw and influence the affections. Now, supposing that some of the heathens (though very few), by discovering the internal beauty of virtue, were taken with, and had a love to it, and performed some things without any private respect, but for the rectitude of the action, and the inward satisfaction that springs from it; yet they were still defective: for virtue is but a ray of the Deity; and our duty is not complete, unless it be referred to his glory, who is the principle and pattern of it. In short, the great Creator made man for himself: and it is most just and reasonable, that as his favour is our sovereign happiness, so his glory should be our supreme end, without which nothing is regular and truly beautiful.

From all which the necessity of Christ's teaching, and of a divine revelation, clearly appears.

But I must conclude this subject with some improvement.

1. From this doctrine we may infer the continual necessity of a standing ministry. Christ is gone into heaven, and will continue there until the time of the restitution of all things; but by his ministers and ambassadors he daily teaches and instructs us, and for that purpose hath fixed them in the church by a firm and lasting constitution, which shall remain to the end of the world, Matth. xxviii. 16, 20. This is a great and valuable privilege, which we ought highly to prize, and carefully to improve. This alone is sufficient to counterbalance the greatest outward affliction that people can meet with in the world; and therefore we have that promise, Isa. xxx. 20. 'Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers.'

2. The most rude and ignorant may be taught, seeing Christ executes the office of a Teacher. He can teach the most stupid, and

give them an understanding to know the truths of the gospel. Therefore ignorance can be no excuse to gospel-hearers, to whom Christ offers himself as a Teacher. Let the most ignorant among you apply to him, and he will teach you more than the most accomplished philosophers could ever attain by all their improvements of natural light.

3. The weakest Christians need not be discouraged at the dulness and incapacity which they find in themselves: for Christ can easily reveal that to babes which is hid from the wise and prudent: 'The testimonies of the Lord are sure (says the Psalmist), making wise the simple.' Yea, the Lord delights to chuse such as you are, that his grace may appear the more conspicuous in your weakness, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Well then, weak but serious Christian, be not discouraged, because you are not so docile and quick in your apprehensions of things as others about you. Many of your neighbours may know more in other things than you do: but you are not incapable of knowing so much as is necessary to the salvation of your soul, and shall certainly know it, if Christ be your Teacher; and that is sufficient to make you happy for ever. Others indeed may far excel you in the knowledge of other things: but if you know Jesus Christ, and the truth as it is in Jesus, one drop of your knowledge is more valuable and desirable than a whole sea of their natural and political knowledge. One precious truth sucked from the breast of Christ by faith and prayer, is infinitely better than ten thousand dry notions, hewn out by racking and torturing the understanding.

4. Prayer is a proper means for the increase of knowledge. Prayer is the golden key that unlocks that sacred treasure. When Daniel was to expound that secret which was contained in the king's dream, about which the Chaldean magicians had racked their brains to no purpose, you see he addressed God by Prayer, Dan. ii. 17, 18. and you see there what success he had, the secret was revealed to him. Luther was wont to say, Three things made a divine, viz. meditation, temptation, and prayer. And a holy man in our neighbouring nation was wont to study upon his knees. And indeed those truths which are got by prayer leave an unusual sweetness upon the heart. In the use of means you should have your eyes towards Christ, and pray that he would open your understandings, and enlighten your minds with saving knowledge. This was David's practice. See Psal. cxix. 18, 33, 34.

5. Learn from this what entertainment ye are to give to the word. Be not strangers to your Bibles; but read them as Christ's word to you, with reverence, faith, and love. Make conscience of

attending on the preaching of the word, catechising, and the dispensing of the sacraments; and set yourselves to drink up the doctrine of Christ from himself as your Teacher. If people believed that Christ were exercising his prophetical office among them in that way, they would not dare to treat these exercises as they do.

6. See here the abomination of the Quakers and other enthusiasts, who separate the Spirit from the word. To these may be added those who take up the principles without ground from the word, upon the credit of dreams, visions, voices, and impressions. And much more those who do so upon their own light fancies, without serious examination of them by the word. The practices of all such are an abomination to the Lord; they act in direct opposition to Christ as the great Teacher sent from God; and consequently the light that is in them is darkness.

7. See also the abomination of formalists and legal professors, who know nothing of religion but *Do, do.* Being unacquainted with a due sense of their own emptiness and darkness in spiritual things, and with the way of making use of Christ as a Prophet, they content themselves with the word without the Spirit, and what they can hammer out of it on their own anvil, so separating the word from the Spirit. And thus they live ignorant of the Spirit's irradiations on the word, and his clearing up scripture-truths to them; which are only had in the way of the soul's going out of itself and its own wisdom to Christ, in a way of believing and depending on him for influences of light and knowledge. This is the neck-break and ruin of many in our day.

8. Wo to them, then, that have the teaching of the word without the Spirit. Ah! do men think nothing to hear so much, and to be illuminated by the Spirit in nothing? Christ may be a Prophet to others, but he cannot be one to such. Let them seriously consider that awful passage, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

9. Receive Christ as a Prophet, and learn to make use of him daily as such. Renounce your own wit and wisdom, and receive instruction from the mouth of this divine Teacher, who teaches to profit. Be of a docile disposition, willing and inclined to be taught of God: for the meek will he teach his way. And, for the Lord's sake, refuse not to hearken to the voice of this great Prophet, otherwise it will be your ruin. Consider the awful certification in the 23d verse of the chapter where our text lies, 'And it shall come to pass, that every soul that will not hear that Prophet, shall be

destroyed from among the people.' Hear him, then, and 'beware lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish,' Acts xiii. 40, 41.

10. *Lastly*, Would you know if ye be taught of God? I offer you the following marks.

(1.) Christ's teachings are very humbling to the soul. Human knowledge puffeth up; but divine knowledge abaseth and casteth down. It empties a man of all conceit of his own worth, and fills him with low and abasing thoughts of himself. So it was with Job, chap. xlii. 5, 6. 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' The same light of the Spirit which discovers unto us the glorious greatness and majesty of God, and his other shining perfections, discovers also, at the same time, the vileness, baseness, emptiness and utter unworthiness of man, yea of the best and holiest of men, as in the case of Isaiah, chap. vi. 5. 'Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' When Paul got a saving sight of Christ, he calls himself the least of all saints, and the chief of sinners. Were you ever deeply humbled before the Lord and made to see your own emptiness and vileness? Those who are puffed up with pride and self-conceit, are strangers to the teaching of Christ.

(2.) The teachings of Christ deeply affect and impress the heart. They fully reach the soul of a sinner, Hos. ii. 14. 'I will speak comfortably unto her;' or, as in the original, 'I will speak to her heart.' When Christ sheweth unto men the great evil and danger of sin, he so convinceth and toucheth the soul, that no creature-comforts can yield any pleasure or sweetness, but prove all tasteless and insipid, and have no more pleasure than the white of an egg. And when he speaks peace to the soul, and intimates the pardon of sin, he so comforts and refreshes it, that no afflictions or pressures, however heavy and uneasy, have any weight or bitterness in them at all. One drop of consolation from heaven sweetens a whole sea of trouble upon earth, and fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Says the Psalmist, Psal. xciv. 19. 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.'

(3.) The teachings of Christ are sanctifying and renewing: they change and reform the heart, Eph. iv. 21, 22, 23. 'If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.' You see here that holiness and

purity is the effect of divine teaching; holiness both external and internal, negative and positive. All the discoveries of God which Christ makes to the soul have an assimilating quality, and change it into his own likeness, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(4.) All Christ's teachings are practical, issuing in cheerful obedience. Idle notions and useless speculations are not learned from Christ. As his creating words, so his teaching words, are always attended with effect. As when he said, 'Let there be light, and there was light;' so when he says to a soul, Be thou humbled, it is effectually humbled; as in the case of Job, chap. xl. 4, 5. 'Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.' And when he says, Be thou comforted, comfort immediately follows, Isa. lxvi. 13. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jesusalem.'

(5.) Christ's teachings are always agreeable to the written word. The Spirit of Christ and the word of Christ never disagree, as John xiv. 26. 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' When he speaks to the heart of a sinner, whether in a way of conviction, instruction, or consolation, he either makes use of the express words of scripture, or speaks to the heart in a language every way agreeable thereunto. So that the written word becomes the standard and touchstone to weigh and try all doctrines by, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Whatever differs from the scriptures of truth, must not pass for an inspiration of God, but is a deluding sophism and insinuation of the devil.

(6.) You will have a great love to your teacher, and will be in case to say with David, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee,' Psal. lxxiii. 25.

OF CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

HEBREWS vii. 17.—*Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

IT is evident from the context, that the apostle is speaking of Christ as a Priest, applying to him this passage taken from Psal. cx. 4. *Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* Where two things are proposed; 1. That he is indeed *a Priest*, whose business it is to offer sacrifices. 2. That he is so *after the order of Melchisedec;* noting thereby the similitude betwixt the two, the one being a notable type of the other. This likeness consists not in an unbloody sacrifice, that of bread and wine, which Melchisedec brought forth to Abraham when he returned from the slaughter of the kings who had taken Sodom and Gomorrah; but, (1.) In the name, Christ being the true 'King of righteousness,' and 'King of peace,' in which respect Melchisedec was only a type of him, Heb. vii. 2. (2.) In their original; ver. 3. Melchisedec is represented as 'without father, without mother, without descent, having no beginning of days;' nothing being recorded of his birth and parentage, he is like an immortal. In this he was a notable type of Christ, who had no father as man, no mother as God, was God himself from eternity, and his goings forth were of old, from everlasting. (3.) In their continuance, because Melchisedec's death is no where recorded, ver. 8.; but is represented as one who liveth. So Christ our High Priest liveth for ever, to make intercession for us. (4.) In their office, Melchisedec was priest of the most high God, and king of Salem, or Jerusalem. So Christ is a Priest, who offered himself a sacrifice to God, and he is constituted King of Zion, of the church. (5.) In respect of unity. Melchisedec is set forth as having neither predecessor nor successor in his office. So Christ was set up to be a priest from everlasting, and is represented as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and the sacrifice that he offered being perfect, there is no more occasion for any other priests; and he has no successor, having an unchangeable and perpetual priesthood. (6.) In respect of dignity; Melchisedec being proposed as greater than Abraham. So Christ is greater than both: for he said, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' Thus Christ is a Priest, and that for ever. In this office is contained the grand relief of poor souls distressed and perplexed with the guilt and burden of their sins. When all other remedies have been tried in vain, it is the blood of the sacrifice of Christ, sprinkled by faith upon the trembling conscience, that must cool and refresh, and sweetly compose and settle it.

The doctrine arising from the text is,

Doct. 'Christ executeth the office of a Priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew that Christ is truly and properly a Priest.

II. Explain the nature of Christ's priestly office.

III. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew that Christ is truly and properly a Priest. This is evident, if we consider, 1. That the scripture holds him forth as such, Psal. cx. 4. and Heb. v. and other places of that epistle. 2. Because he exercises the acts of the priestly office, in offering sacrifice, and praying for his people. 3. Because he was typified by such as were really priests, as all the Levitical priests, and Melchisedec.

Quest. Wherein did Christ's priestly office differ from the priestly office under the ceremonial law?

1. The priests under the law were priests after the order of Aaron: but Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. Who this Melchisedec was, it is in vain to inquire, and cannot possibly be known; the Holy Ghost designedly concealing his genealogy, beginning and ending, and descent, that so he might be a fitter type of Christ and his everlasting priesthood. He was like a man dropt from the clouds, and at last caught up again, and none knew how. It is said of him, Heb. vii. 3. that he was 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.' Now, Christ was a Priest after the order of this Melchisedec, not by a corporeal unction, legal ceremony, or the intervening act of a human ordination, but by a divine and heavenly institution, and immediate unction of the Spirit of life, in that extraordinary manner, whereby he was to be both King and priest unto God, as Melchisedec was, Heb. vii. 16. He was not a Priest after the order of Aaron, because the law made nothing perfect, but was weak and unprofitable; and therefore was to be abolished, and to give place to another priesthood. Men were not to rest in it, but to be led by it to him who was to abolish it, Heb. vii. 11, 12. The ministry and promises of Christ were better than those of the law; and therefore his priesthood, which was the office of dispensing them, was to be more excellent too, Heb. viii. 6. For when the law and covenant were to be abolished, the priesthood, in which they were established, was likewise to die.

2. The priests under the law were sinful men, and therefore of-

fered sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people, Heb. v. 3. But Christ was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself,' Heb. vii. 26, 27. He was perfectly pure and holy, and could stand before God even in the eye of his strict justice, 'as a lamb without blemish and without spot.' Though he 'made his soul an offering for sin,' yet he 'had done no iniquity, neither was there any guile found in his mouth.' And indeed his sacrifice had done us no good, had he been tainted with the least sin.

3. The priests under the law were many, because they were mortal; death as an universal deluge was continually sweeping them off the stage. But Christ as a Priest for ever, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 23. 'This man continueth ever.'

4. The priesthood under the law was changeable; but Christ's priesthood is unchangeable. The legal dispensation was to continue only for a time. It was but like the morning star to usher in the rising sun, which so soon as he appears in our horizon, it evanishes and shrinks away, Heb. vii. 12. God confirmed this priesthood with an oath, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 21. as well as a King. Those offices which were divided before between two families, were both united and vested in Christ; this being absolutely necessary for the discharge of his Mediatory undertaking, and for the establishment of his kingdom, which being of another kind than the kingdoms of this world, even spiritual and heavenly, therefore needed such a King as was also a minister of holy things. And the apostle tells us, Heb. vii. 24. that 'this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.'

5. The priests under the law offered many sacrifices, and of various kinds, as lambs and rams, calves and bullocks, and the blood of many beasts: but Christ offered but once, and that but one sacrifice, even the sacrifice of himself. So it is said, Heb. ix. 25, 26. 'Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year, with the blood of others; (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world): but now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' And herein he excelled and far transcended all other priests, in this, that he had something of his own to offer. He had a body given him to be at his own disposal for this very end and purpose. It is said, Heb. x. 5, 7, 10. 'Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not but a body hast thou prepared me. Then said I, Lo, I

come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' He offered up his body, and not only his body, but his soul also was made an offering for sin, Isa. liii. 10. We had made a forfeiture both of our souls and bodies by sin. It was therefore necessary that the sacrifice of Christ should be answerable to the debt which we owed to God. And when Christ came to offer up his sacrifice he stood not only in the capacity of a Priest, but also in that of a Surety; and so his soul stood in the stead of ours, and his body in the stead of our bodies.

6. All those sacrifices that the priests offered under the law were types of the sacrifice of Christ, which he was to offer in the fulness of time, they not being sufficient in themselves to purge away sin, nor acceptable to God any further than Christ was eyed in them. But Christ's sacrifice was the thing typified by all these oblations, and is efficacious in itself for the satisfaction of justice, and the expiation of sin, Heb. x. 1, 4, 14. 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' His sacrifice was invaluably precious, and of infinite efficacy and virtue. And such it behoved to be: for it being offered as an expiatory sacrifice, it ought to be proportioned and equivalent, in its own intrinsic value, to all the souls and bodies that were to be redeemed by it. So that as one rich diamond is more in worth than ten thousand pebbles, or one piece of gold than many counters, so the sacrifice of Christ's soul and body is far more valuable than all the souls and bodies in the world.

7. The priests under the law appeared before God in behalf of the people, in the temple made with hands; but Christ appeareth in heaven itself. The Levitical priests offered sacrifices and made prayers for the people in the temple; and the high priest, who was an eminent type of Christ, entered into the holy of holies, the figure of heaven, once a-year, and that not without blood. This was typical of Christ's entering into heaven itself in his people's name, to appear for them before the throne of God. Hence it is said, Heb. ix. 24. 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' 1 John ii. 1. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'

8. The priests under the law had only the office of priesthood; but Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King.

II. Let us take a view of the nature of Christ's priesthood. The office of the priests was to offer sacrifices, and to pray for the people. Hence there are two parts of Christ's priestly office, namely, oblation of the sacrifice, and intercession.

Of CHRIST'S OBLATION.

One part of Christ's priestly office was the oblation of a sacrifice. Where we may consider,

1. The import of offering.
2. What was the sacrifice.
3. How often he did offer himself.
4. For whom he did so.
5. For what ends he did offer himself.
6. The efficacy of his one offering.

First, I am to shew what the import of offering is. It signifies the voluntariness of Christ's sufferings, Eph. v. 2. 'Christ hath given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. He laid down his life of himself, that he might take it again. 'He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' For,

1. Though he well knew his sufferings beforehand, and that dreadful storm of the divine wrath and indignation that was to fall upon him, and all the abuse, indignities, and torments, he was to meet with from wicked men and on the cross, yet he did not withdraw from that dreadful apparatus of a violent death when his time was come; he would not suffer his disciples, could they have done it, to rescue him from the impending danger: nay his delivering himself up to his blood-thirsty pursuers, after he had exhibited a remarkable instance of his divine power, in making them fall to the ground with a word, John xviii. 28. was an evidence, that he was nowise constrained, but a hearty volunteer in his then intended offering. The cup of his sufferings was continually before his eyes; he never declined to drink of it: nay, he was pained and straitened till he drank it to the bottom.

2. The strong cry he uttered immediately before his yielding up his soul on the cross, was an evidence there was more than a natural power attending him in that important crisis. He was no criminal in the eye of God and scripture, and could not have been put to death unless he had pleased, being the most high God, and

Sovereign of men and angels, and therefore having the whole creation at his command. The strong cry he then uttered was not the effect of weakness or reluctance to part with his life, such as a criminal may be supposed to give, but rather a shout of triumph, proceeding from one who had spontaneously offered himself to such a dreadful death, testifying before God, angels, and men, his joy and exultation in having performed the arduous work he had of his own proper motion engaged to achieve.

Secondly, Let us consider what was the sacrifice he offered up. On this head it may not be improper to observe, that sacrifices were of two sorts.

1. Some were eucharistical, or thank-offerings in testimony of homage, subjection, duty, and service; as the dedication of the first fruits, the meat and drink offerings. By these the sacrificer acknowledged the bounty and goodness of God, and his own unworthiness to receive the least of his favours, rendered praise for mercies received, and desired the divine blessing. But Christ's sacrifice was not of this kind.

2. Some sacrifices were expiatory, for the satisfaction of justice, and the purging away of sin. The institution of this kind of sacrifices was upon a double account. (1.) That man is a sinner, and therefore obnoxious to the just indignation and extreme displeasure of the holy and righteous God, and laid fairly open to all the fierceness of wrath and vengeance. (2.) That God was to be propitiated, that so he might pardon man. These truths are rooted and deeply engraven in the natural consciences of men, as appears by the pretended expiations of sin among the Heathens. But they are more clearly revealed in sacred writ. Under the law, without the effusion of blood there was no remission, to intimate unto us, that God would not forgive sin without the atonement of justice, which required the death of the offender: but it being tempered with mercy, accepted of a sacrifice in his stead.

Of this last kind was the sacrifice of Christ, which he offered for us, even a sacrifice of expiation. All this was requisite to a real and proper sacrifice, concurred in his sacrifice. As,

1. The person offering was to be a priest. It was the peculiar office of a priest under the law to offer sacrifices. So says the apostle, Heb. v. 1. 'Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.' In like manner Christ, that he might offer this sacrifice, was called to that office, and made an High Priest in the house of God; as appears from Heb. v. 4, 5, 6, and 10. He is called 'the Apostle and High Priest of our pro-

fession; and it is said, 'Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.'

2. There was something to be offered, and that was himself, He was the sacrifice that he offered up unto God. Our great High Priest behoved to have a sacrifice answerable to the debt that we owed to God; and the debt was the forfeiture of both soul and body to the wrath of God, and the curse of the law: and therefore our High Priest was to have a soul and body to suffer in as our Surety. 'He made his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. 'My soul,' says he 'is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. A body hast thou prepared me,' Heb. x. 5. And it is said, Heb. x. 10. 'We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. He himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' 1 Pet. ii. 24. He took upon him our nature, that he might have a proper sacrifice to offer. Christ was a sacrifice in his human nature. He suffered in his soul and body. It is to be observed, that doing or suffering belongs to the whole person. Hence the church is said to be redeemed with 'the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. Yet the notion of a sacrifice importing suffering, and the divine nature not being capable of it, he himself was the sacrifice indeed, not in the divine, but in the human nature. Even as a murderer is said to kill a man, though he kill not the soul. Now, that he suffered in his body, appears from the history of his passion in the evangelists. And his soul-sufferings also are evident from the same history. His sufferings in his soul he himself testifies, when he says, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.' These were the soul of his sufferings, and far greater than those of his body. They consisted (1.) In his being deserted of God, whereby all comfort was eclipsed from his holy soul, Psal. xxii. 1. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (2.) In the impressions of God's wrath on it, which produced that bloody sweat in the garden, by which blood transpired from his sacred body. God knew how to let him feel his wrath as our Surety; and yet was pleased with him as a Son. (3.) In the assaults of the powers of darkness and spiritual wickednesses, who assailed him with redoubled fury in that hour of darkness. The prince of this world attacked him more fiercely then than ever before.

3. There was an altar on which this sacrifice was offered: for it is the altar that sanctifieth the offering, and renders it acceptable to God, and useful to man; and that was his divine nature. 'Through the eternal Spirit,' says the apostle, 'he offered himself without spot unto God,' Heb. ix. 14. and so by his blood purgeth our consciences from dead works. For Christ as God sanctified himself as

man, that so, through the virtue and merit of his sacrifice, his people might be sanctified also, John xvii. 19. There behoved to be something to add an infinite value and efficacy to the sufferings of his humanity; which could be nothing else but the divine nature. The human nature suffered, and the divine nature sanctified the humanity; and, by reason of this admirable union, and the reflection of the Divinity upon the humanity, what was done to the human nature upon the cross is ascribed to the whole person.' They 'crucified the Lord of glory,' says the apostle; and, 'God purchased the church with his own blood.' It was this that made his sufferings acceptable and highly pleasing to God, whose justice was to be appeased and satisfied; and it was this that made them efficacious for man, whose happiness and commerce with God were to be restored and his guilt removed. So that he had a human nature that served for a sacrifice, and a divine nature wherein he subsisted, from whence that sacrifice derived an infinite dignity and value. Thus Christ was a priest in his person, a sacrifice in his humanity, and the altar in his Divinity.

4. In a sacrifice the things offered were to be of God's appointment, or else it had not been an acceptable sacrifice, but will worship; and no more a sacrifice on God's account, than the cutting off a dog's neck, or offering swine's blood, as appears by the law given by Moses concerning free-will offerings, Lev. v. So that what Christ offered was appointed and prepared by God. He prepared him a body, that he might offer it for a sacrifice. It was a living body, a body animated with a rational soul, which soul was separated from his body in the offering; and therefore he is said to 'have made his soul an offering for sin;' and that soul and body constituted his human nature. This was the sacrifice that was appointed of God for the expiation of the elect's sin. Hence says the apostle, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold;—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

5. The thing offered in sacrifice was to be destroyed. This is essential to a sacrifice. Those things that were endued with life were killed, that so they might be offered to God in sacrifice, and their blood was poured out, and the other parts of them, besides the blood were burned with fire, either wholly or in part. And thus was Christ sacrificed. His dying and bleeding on the cross, answered the killing and shedding of the blood of the Levitical sacrifices: and his sufferings (expressed by the pains of hell) were correspondent to the burning of these sacrifices. It is said, Heb. xiii. 12, 13. 'Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his

own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.' His sufferings without the gate are held forth here, as answering the burning of the sacrifices without the camp.

6. The person to whom the sacrifices were offered, was God, and he only. It was gross idolatry to offer them to any other. Hence they are called 'things pertaining to God,' Heb. v. 1. and Christ's sacrifice was thus offered up to God, Heb. ii. 17. He performed the office of a merciful and faithful High Priest in offering up himself a sacrifice to God. God was the party offended by man's sin, and whose justice behoved to be satisfied, Eph. v. 2. Here is a mystery of wonders, where one party is the party offended, the priest, and the sacrifice.

Thirdly, I come now to consider how often Christ did offer himself. It was only once, Heb. ix. 28. 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;' and that one and once offering fully answered the end of his offering himself: for, says the apostle, 'by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' Heb. x. 14. This was the difference, as I have observed above, between the Levitical priests and our High Priest, that they offered many sacrifices, which argued the imperfection of their ministry; but Christ only once, Heb. x. 14. just cited. As for the notion of the sacrament's being changed into a sacrifice, as the Papists pretend, there is no foundation for it: for there Christ is not offered to God, but to us; and it is no renewal of that sacrifice, but a solemn commemoration of it.

Fourthly, I go on to shew for whom Christ offered himself a sacrifice.

1. It was not for his own sins, for he had none; but for the sins and transgressions of others, Dan. ix. 26. 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.' He could not suffer for any sin of his own; for he was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' Though he made his soul an offering for sin, yet he had done no iniquity, neither was guile found in his mouth. As the legal lambs were without blemish, so Christ was a Lamb without spot. His extraordinary and miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin was an effectual bar against original sin, and he had no actual sin in the course of his life. He was infinitely holy as God, and habitually holy as man. Every power and faculty of his soul, and every member of his body, was elevated and raised to the highest pitch of holiness. And he fulfilled all righteousness in his life, and gave complete satisfaction to all the demands of the law;

so that he needed not, as the Levitical priests, first to offer sacrifice for his own sin, and then for the sins of the people.

2. Christ did not offer up this sacrifice for the sins of fallen angels; for there was no sacrifice appointed for them. Whenever they rebelled against their sovereign Lord and Creator, they were immediately expelled from the divine presence, and are kept in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day. Christ took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. He offered up the sacrifice of himself to make an atonement for the sins of men.

3. Christ did not die a sacrifice for every man and woman in the world. It is true, there was virtue and efficacy enough in his oblation to satisfy offended justice for the sins of the whole world, yea, and of millions of worlds more; for his blood hath infinite value, because of the infinite dignity and excellency of his person. And in this sense some divines understand those places of scripture where he is called the Saviour of the whole world. Yet the efficacy and saving virtue of his sacrifice extendeth not unto all. For,

1*st*. It is restricted in scripture to a certain number, called sometimes the church of God, as Acts xx. 28. 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,' Eph. v. 25. 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.' Sometimes they are called his sheep, as John x. 15. 'I lay down my life for my sheep.' They are also called those that were given to him by the Father, John xvii. 2. 'Thou hast given him power of all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' See also John x. 26,—29. In these places of scripture, and others that might be named, you see that Christ's death is restricted to a certain number of persons, exclusive of all others.

2*dly*, If Christ would not pray for every one in the world, then certainly he did not die for every one in particular. But so it is that he excludes the reprobate world from the benefit of his prayer, John xvii. 9. 'I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me.' Both the parts of Christ's priesthood, his offering sacrifice and his intercession, are of the same latitude and extent. We find them joined together in the scripture by an inseparable connection, Rom. viii. 34. 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, 1 John ii. 1, 2. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins. So that Christ intercedes for all those for whom he satisfied offended justice: but he intercedes not for the whole world, but only for those whom God hath given him; and therefore he did not satisfy offended justice for all men.

3dly, Christ's death is an act of the highest love that ever was or can be manifested to the world. 'Greater love,' says he, 'hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' And says the apostle, Rom. v. 8. 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Now, it is plain, and cannot be denied, that every one of Adam's posterity is not the object of Christ's dearest love: and therefore he did not lay down his life for every one of them.

4thly, To affirm that Christ offered up himself a sacrifice with a design and intention to save all mankind, great absurdities would follow. As,

(1.) That Christ died for many, yea for innumerable multitudes, who never heard of his blessed name, nor of the blessings and benefits which were purchased by his death.—But this runs cross to the strain and current of the scripture, which tells us plainly, that there can be no salvation but by faith in Christ; and that without hearing of him there can be no faith, Rom. x. 14, 15, 16.

(2.) If Christ died for all, then this absurdity would follow, that he died for those whom he knew to be children of wrath and sons of perdition, whom God had passed by, and left to perish eternally in that miserable condition into which they had plunged themselves by sin.

(3.) If Christ died for all men, then he died for those who are now roaring in hell, and scorched and tormented with unquenchable fire, without any hope of redemption; and so he bare the punishment of their sins, and they are also now bearing and shall bear it for ever themselves.

(4.) If Christ died with an intention to save all men, then he is an imperfect and incomplete Saviour, who hath satisfied offended justice for their sins, and purchased redemption by his blood, but cannot apply it. He is only a true Saviour of those who are actually saved, and obtain salvation by him.

(5.) If Christ died for all men, then he died in vain for the most part, and his death and sacrifice had little effect; for the generality of men and women will perish eternally. There are many nations in the world that never heard of Christ; and even where the gospel is preached, our Saviour tells us, that 'wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many go in thereat; but that strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it, Mat. vii. 12, 13. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.' So that Christ did not offer up the sacrifice of himself for every one in particular.

4. Christ died for the elect, and for all the elect, and none else.

God designed to save some of the lost posterity of Adam, for the manifestation of the glory of the exceeding riches of his grace; and Christ died for all these, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6, Compare the following scriptures, Acts xiii. 48. Rom. iv. 25. and v. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. 1 Pet. ii. 21, 24. &c. from which we may be fully convinced that Christ died only for the elect.

Fifthly, I come now to shew, for what ends Christ offered up himself a sacrifice. It was to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God. The grand design and intendment of this oblation was to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving him a full and adequate satisfaction for the sins of the elect world. So the apostle teaches us, Col. i. 20. 'Having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself.' 2 Cor. v. 19. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,' &c. Reconciliation is the making up of that breach which sin had made between God and us, and restoring us again to the forfeited favour and friendship of Heaven. This was the design and intendment of Christ's sacrifice, Eph. ii. 16. Now, Christ's sacrifice, abundantly satisfied these ends. And therefore I proceed,

Sixthly, To prove that Christ gave full satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of all the elect. This is clear and evident,

1. From many texts of scripture which merit your perusal, as Eph. v. 2. Heb. vii. 26, 27. x. 14. and ix. 13, 14.

2. Christ's resurrection from the dead proves the validity and completeness of his satisfaction. As the elect's Surety, he satisfied the law in his death; and having thereby paid all their debt, he received an acquittance, and the discharge was solemnly published to the world in his resurrection. He was released from the grave, as from prison, by a public sentence; which is an undeniable argument of the validity of the payment made by him in our name. For being under such strong bands as the justice and power of God, God could never have loosed the pains of death, if his sufferings had not been fully satisfactory to God, and received and accepted by him for our discharge. And it is observable to this purpose, that the raising of Christ is ascribed to God as reconciled, Heb. xiii. 20. The divine power was not put forth in loosing the bands of death till God was pacified. Justice incensed exposed him to death, and justice appeased raised him from the dead. If he had not paid all his people's debt by sacrifice, he had been detained a prisoner for ever in the grave. But God having received full satisfaction, set him free.

3. His ascension into heaven proves the completeness and all-sufficiency of his sacrifice. If he had been excluded from the divine

presence, there had been just cause to suspect, that anger had been still resting in the breast of God; but his admission into heaven is an infallible testimony that God is reconciled. Our Saviour produces this as the convincing argument by which the Holy Ghost will effectually overcome the guilty fears of men, John xvi. 10. 'He will convince the world of righteousness, because I go to my Father.' Christ in his sufferings was numbered among transgressors; he died as a guilty person; but having overcome death, and returned to his Father again, he made the innocency of his person manifest and apparent, and shewed that a complete righteousness is acquired by his sufferings, sufficient to justify all those who shall truly accept of it.

4. The many excellent benefits which God reconciled bestows upon his people, prove the completeness of Christ's satisfaction.

(1.) Justification is a fruit of Christ's death; for the obligation of the law is made void by it, whereby the sinner was bound over to eternal wrath and punishment; Col. ii. 14. 'Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.' The terms are here used which are proper to the cancelling of a civil bond. The killing letter of the law is abolished by the blood of the cross; the nails and the spear, which pierced his sacred body, have rent it in pieces, to intimate that its condemning power is taken away. The forgiveness of sin is the chief part of our redemption, and it is ascribed to Christ's blood as the procuring cause of it, Eph. i. 7. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' The payment made by the Surety is a discharge of the principal debtor from the pursuit of the creditor. As Christ took away the curse from his people, being made a curse for them; so he takes away sin from his people, being made sin for them.

(2.) The death of Christ procured grace and holiness for men. We made a forfeiture of our original righteousness and sanctity, and were justly deprived of it; and till once divine justice was appeased, all influences of grace were suspended. Now, the sacrifice of Christ opened heaven, and brought down the Spirit, who is the principal and efficient cause of sanctification in men. The whole world lay in wickedness, as a dead carcase in the grave, entirely insensible of its horror and corruption. But the Holy Spirit inspired it with new life, and by a marvellous change hath caused purity to succeed corruption. It had been a great favour indeed to be delivered from the guilt of sin, that bound us over to everlasting wrath and punishment; but it had not been a perfect and complete favour, without our being delivered from the venom and filth of sin,

which had infected and corrupted our whole nature. If our guilt were only removed, we had been freed from punishment; but without the restoration of the divine image we had not been qualified for heaven, and fitted for converse with God. It was necessary that our souls should be washed, and our faculties renewed, to put us in a capacity to serve God and enjoy communion with him. And this is only obtained by Christ's death, Tit. ii. 14.

(3.) The receiving believers into heaven is a convincing proof of the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. The gates of the New Jerusalem were fast shut against sinful man, when he fell from his primitive holiness and felicity. God banished him from his presence, and drove him out of paradise, his native seat, fencing it with cherubims to prevent his re-entry. But Christ hath set open these everlasting doors, that believers may enter freely in, Heb. x. 19, 20. This shews the validity of his satisfaction. For divine justice will not permit that glory and immortality, which are the privileges of innocency and righteousness, should be given to guilty and polluted criminals; and therefore it was Christ's first and greatest work to remove the bar that excluded men from the sanctuary of felicity. Now, what stronger argument can there be, that God is infinitely pleased with what Christ has done and suffered for his people, than the taking of them into his presence to behold his glory? The apostle sets down this order in the work of our redemption, Heb. v. 9. that 'Christ being made perfect through sufferings, became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' In short, it is observable, that the scripture attributes to the death of Christ, not only justification, whereby we are redeemed from wrath and misery, that dreadful punishment which we deserved for sin, but such an abundant merit also, which purchases adoption for us, and all the glorious privileges of the sons of God.

From all which it is evident, that the sacrifice of Christ answered all the ends for which it was designed. It gave full satisfaction to the justice of God, and made up an everlasting peace between God and sinners.

Quest. What was it that rendered Christ's sacrifice so acceptable to God, and so efficacious for men?

Ans. 1. The quality of his person derived an infinite value to his obedience and sufferings. He was equally God, and as truly infinite in his perfections as the Father who was provoked by our sins. He was the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in all things. The fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him; and he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. His person was of as great dignity and honour as the Father's

was, to whom he was offered. Though there be a distinction of order among the persons of the Godhead, yet there is no priority, nor distinction of dignity. This made his sufferings of infinite and eternal value. For though his Deity was impassable, yet he that was a divine person suffered. And it is especially to be observed, that the efficacy of his blood is ascribed to the divine nature. So the apostle declareth, Col. i. 14. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin.' The efficacy of the Deity mingled itself with every groan in his agony, and with every pang and cry upon the cross. And as his blood was the blood of God, as it is called, Acts xx. 28. so his groans were the groans of God, and his cries the cries of God, and therefore of infinite value. What he acted and suffered as man, was dignified and rendered efficacious by his divine nature. From this arises the infinite difference between the sacrifices of the law, and the sacrifice of Christ, both in virtue and value. This is set down by the apostle with admirable emphasis, Heb. ix. 13, 14. 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God; by the personal union with the Deity, great dignity was conferred upon the sufferings of the human nature.

2. The virtue and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice flowed from the infinite holiness and purity of his person. He was holy, harmless, &c. He was as free from blemish, as he was full of the Spirit. The spotlessness of his human nature was necessary to his being a sacrifice, and the union of the divine nature was necessary to his being a valuable sacrifice. He had no sin naturally imputed, and he had no sin personally inherent. He had no sin naturally imputed, because he was not descended from Adam by ordinary generation, who introduced sin into the world, and derived it down to all his progeny. He was holy in all his offices, harmless as a priest, faithful as a prophet, holy in his life and death; no guile was found in his mouth, nor any inordinate motions and desires in his heart. His sacrifice could not have availed us, if he had been tainted with the least sin.

3. The graces exercised in his sufferings rendered his sacrifice fragrant and acceptable to God, Phil. ii. 8. 'He became obedient unto death.' His obedience ran with a cheerful and prevalent strain through the whole course of his life. He submitted to a body, fitted to receive all those strokes of wrath that we should have endured for ever; a body made under the law, subject to the obedience and malediction of it. He delighted to do the will of God in

human nature, Psal. xl. 6, 7. He came not to do his own will, but that of him who sent him. Whatever was ordered him by his Father, that he spake, did, and suffered. He cheerfully laid down his life when the hour appointed by the Father was come. It was not a simple, but an affectionate obedience: 'As the Father gave me commandment, (says he), so I do,' John xiv. 31. His offering himself a sacrifice according to the will of God for our sanctification, was the most significant part of his obedience. This rendered his sacrifice highly acceptable. Again, his admirable humility is joined with his obedience, as the cause of his exaltation, which was an evidence of its fragrancy, Phil. ii. 8. That the Lord of glory should stoop so low as to put himself in the room of sinners, eclipsing the bright lustre and splendour of his glory, and shrouding under the disguise of our infirm flesh, submitting himself to a harder piece of service, and to deeper degrees of humiliation, than ever any creature in heaven or earth was capable of; to descend from the throne of his inaccessible light, and to expose himself to the rage and fury of devils and men, without murmuring or impatience, to submit himself to an infamous death, endure the wrath of an offended God and Father, whom he infinitely loved, shed his precious blood, and descend into the grave; this was an inexpressible and inimitable act of humility, lower than which he could not stoop. Now, since humility renders men so pleasing to God, that he heaps upon them the greatest testimonies of his favours, and richly dispensed to them the gifts of his grace, it must needs render the Son most acceptable to the Father in these his sufferings, and draw from him the greatest testimonies and distributions of his favours, because it was the greatest act of humility, as well as of obedience, that could possibly be performed. Further, the high exercise of his faith, rendered his sacrifice most acceptable to God. He had not one spark of infidelity, nor any the least grain of distrust in the goodness of God, in the midst of his deepest sorrows. He suffered the torments of hell for a time, without that killing despair that preys upon the inhabitants of that dismal place. He had a working of faith under the sense of his Father's greatest displeasure and confidence in his love, while he felt the outward and inward force of his frowns. He had a faith of the acceptableness of his death for all his people, and gave clear evidence of his confidence in the promise, for a happy and glorious success, in his acting like a king, while he was hanging as a malefactor upon the cross, distributing his largesses to the poor thief, assuring him that on that very day he should be with him in paradise. Both his obedience to God in not turning his back, and his trust in God for his help and assistance, are joined

together as the ground of his justification, Isa. l. 5, 7, 8. The light of his faith was to be discovered in opposition to Adam's unbelief, and his great humility in opposition to Adam's pride. By his active and passive obedience, he glorified the holiness and justice of God; by his humility, the power and sovereignty of God; and by his trust and confidence, the divine faithfulness and veracity. All which must needs render his sacrifice a sweet smelling savour to God, and efficacious for men.

4. The completeness of Christ's satisfaction is grounded on the degrees of his sufferings. There was no defect in that payment which he made. We owed a debt of blood to the law of God, and his life was offered up as a sacrifice, otherwise the law had remained in its full force and vigour, and justice had continued unsatisfied. That a divine person hath suffered the punishment that we deserved, is properly the reason of our redemption; as it is not the quality of the surety that releases the debtor out of prison, but the payment which he makes in his name. The blood of Christ shed, and offered up to God, ratifies the New Testament. In short, our Saviour, in his death, suffered the malediction of the law, even all those degrees of divine wrath and vengeance which the elect should have suffered for ever in hell; and his divine nature gave a full value, and put a high price upon the sufferings of his human nature; so that the satisfaction proceeding from them had an intrinsic worth and value; and God, who was infinitely provoked, is thereby infinitely pleased.

5. The sacrifice of Christ was fragrant and efficacious, because of the great glory and honour which he thereby brought unto God. The glory of his Father was what he had in view, as his main scope and aim in all his actions and sufferings, and that which he also actually perfected. The glory of all the divine attributes appeared in him in its highest lustre, 2 Cor. iv. 6. They all centered in him, and shone forth in their greatest splendor, not only in his incarnation, but also and chiefly in his sacrifice. The mercy and justice of God appear in combination here, and set off one another's lustre. Mercy could not be glorified, unless justice had been satisfied; and justice had not been evidently discovered, if the tokens of divine wrath had not been seen upon Christ. Grace had never sailed to us, but in the streams of the Mediator's blood. 'Without the shedding of blood (says the apostle) there is no remission.' Divine justice had not been so fully known in the eternal groans and shrieks of a world of guilty creatures, nor could sin have appeared so odious to the holiness of God by eternal scars upon devils and men, as by a deluge of blood from the heart of this sacrifice. Without the sufferings of Christ, the glory of the divine perfections had lain in the

cabinet of the divine nature without the discovery of their full beams. And though they were active in the designing of it, yet they had not been declared to men or angels, without the bringing of Christ to the altar. By the stroke upon his soul, all the glories of God flashed out to the view of the creature. All the divine perfections were glorified in the sufferings of Christ; his mercy, justice, power, and wisdom. Here the unsearchable depths of manifold wisdom were unfolded. Such a wisdom of God shined in the cross, as the angels never beheld in his face upon his throne; wisdom to cure a desperate disease, by the death of the physician; to turn the greatest evil to the greatest good; to bring forth mercy by the execution of justice, and the shedding of blood: how surprising and astonishing is this! The ultimate end and design of Christ's sacrifice was the honour of God in our redemption. Christ sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him, John viii. 50. He sought the glory of his Father in the salvation of men. Now, that must needs be fragrant and acceptable to God which accomplished the triumph of all his attributes.

Quest. But did not those sacrifices which were in use under the law satisfy the justice of God, and take away the sins of the people?

To this I answer in the negative. These sacrifices were but shadows by their institution, and were to have their accomplishment in some other, and therefore could make nothing perfect. See what the apostle Paul saith, who was once very zealous for them, Heb. x. 1. 4. 11. 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.' More particularly,

1. It was against common reason, that the sin of a soul should be expiated by the blood of a beast; that the sufferings of a nature so far inferior could be a sufficient compensation for the crime of a nature so much superior to it. The prophet spake the true reason of mankind when he asserted, that the Lord would not be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil; that he would not accept of the first-born of the body as a satisfaction for the sin of the soul, Micah vi. 6. A rational sacrifice was only fit to atone for the sin of a rational being. There was no agreement between the nature of a man and that of a bullock. The nature that sinned was also to suffer, and so to bear the punishment due by the law. 'The soul that sinneth it shall die,' saith the Lord, Ezek.

xviii. 4. If God had been content with the blood of beasts for the sins of men, then there had been no sufficient discovery of the severity of his justice, the purity of his holiness, nor the grandeur of his grace. It was inconsistent with the honour and majesty of God, who had denounced a terrible curse upon all the transgressors of the law, and published it with so much dread and awful solemnity, as thunders and lightnings, fire and smoke, and terrible earthquakes, to make so light of it, as to accept of the blood of a few mangled beasts, in the room of the offender. Would God appear upon mount Sinai with ten thousands of his angels to publish a fiery law, and let all the threatenings of it vanish into smoke? Can any in reason think, that all those fearful curses should be poured out upon a few irrational and innocent creatures, who had never broken that law? Can it ever enter into the heart of man to think, that, after so solemn and terrible a proclamation, he would acquiesce in so slight a compensation as the death of a poor beast? None can possibly entertain so mean and despicable thoughts of the infinite majesty, justice and holiness of God, or of the vile and detestable nature of sin, and the greatness of its provocation, as to imagine that the one could be contented, or the other expiated, by the blood of a lamb or a bullock. Our own consciences will tell us, that if God will have a sacrifice, it must be proportioned to the majesty of him whom they have offended, and to the greatness of the crime which they have committed. If all the cattle upon a thousand hills were sacrificed, and all the cedars in Lebanon were cut down for wood to burn the offering, it could not be a sweet smelling savour to God. There is an infinite disproportion between this kind of sacrifice and the glorious Majesty of Heaven.

2. The repetition of these sacrifices shews their insufficiency for the expiation of sin. For where the conscience is once purged, and the remission of sin obtained, there is no more offering for sin, as the apostle tells us, Heb. x. 18. But the repeating of the sacrifice plainly intimates, that the person for whose sake it is repeated is in the same condition now that he was in at the time of the former oblation. The apostle tells us, that if the law could have made men perfect, then these sacrifices would have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins, but in those sacrifices there was a remembrance again made of sins every year, Heb, x. 2, 3. Had the wrath of God been appeased by them, why should the fire burn perpetually upon the altar? why should it be so fed continually with the carcases of slain beasts? As often as they were offered, there was a conscience of sin excited in the presenter of them, and iniquity was called to

remembrance. The whole scene of the legal administration loudly proclaimed, that the wrath of God against sin was not appeased and that the guilt of the soul was not wiped off. If a man had presented a sacrifice for his sin one day, and fallen into the same or some other sin before night, he must have repeated his sacrifice for a new expiation. Had there been any efficacy in them to purge away sin, then they had ceased; and there would have been no repetition of them.

3. The great variety of these sacrifices shews their insufficiency to take away sin. There were many gifts and sacrifices, bulls and goats, calves and lambs; which shews that no one thing was fit to typify and represent the full expiation wrought by Christ; whereas he offered but one sacrifice, and by that perfected for ever them that are sanctified. As the application of many medicines shews their insufficiency to cure a disease, so the many sacrifices and purifications under the law, plainly evidence that a full and efficacious propitiation for sin was to be sought elsewhere. If the great annual sacrifice, which was the most solemn one in that whole institution could not effect it, much less could sacrifices of a lower dignity. It is from the repetition of this great sacrifice that the apostle argues the insufficiency of them all, Heb. x.

4. God never intended that these sacrifices should expiate sin by any virtue of their own. The great and glorious Majesty of heaven, who was offended and provoked by sin, is truly infinite; and to satisfy him the sacrifices must be infinite too. But none of those sacrifices under the law were so. Why then were they appointed? Not with any intention to purge away the sin of the soul, but the ceremonial uncleanness of the flesh, as Heb. ix. 13, 14. where you see the blood of bulls and of goats sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh. The apostle compares these and the sacrifice of Christ together, and shews that the one purified only the flesh, and the other the conscience. It was not a moral guilt which they were intended to remove, but only a ceremonial one; as when one was defiled by touching a dead carcase or a leprous person, which was reckoned a defilement of the body, not of the soul. God hath often discovered their weakness and insufficiency, and that they could not give him recompense for the injury done him by sin. So Isa. lxvi. 1. 'Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?' By the house or temple here is meant all the Jewish economy, the whole lump of legal sacrifices. Though all these were appointed by God, and had been used by his people for a long time, yet he had no rest in them: they could neither satisfy his

justice nor vindicate the honour of his law, nor could they ever take away sin, Heb. x. 11. And therefore God rejected them, and they were abolished and disannulled, for the weakness and unprofitableness of them, Heb. vii. 18. Though they had been practised by the Jews for so many ages, yet not one sin had been expiated by them in all that long tract of time.

5. The insufficiency of these sacrifices for the satisfaction of divine justice, and the expiation of sin, appears from the end and design of their institution, which was to prefigure and represent a more excellent sacrifice, that was able to do it effectually, even the great sacrifice of Christ. They were but shadows of good things to come, as the apostle terms them, and did typically represent a crucified dying Christ as the substance: and whatever virtue they had, it was not in or from themselves, but from their typical relation to him whom they prefigured. They all pointed forth the sacrifice of Christ, by whose precious blood, shed in the fulness of time, the sins of the elect were fully expiated. God had no pleasure in these sacrifices, but only so far as they represented the sacrifice of Christ, which effectually takes away sin, Heb. x. 6, 7, 8.

From what hath been said on this head, you see that those sacrifices which were in use under the law could not satisfy the justice of God, and take away the sins of men.

Object. If Christ suffered for the sins of his people, then he that was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, must be accounted a guilty person, yea, even the most guilty of all others, as having charged upon him all the sins of an elect world.

Ans. There is a twofold guilt to be considered, namely, a culpable, and a penal guilt. He that commits the offence is under culpable guilt; and he who is obliged to suffer for the offence is under penal guilt, though he did not actually commit it. Now, Christ as our sacrifice was under this penal guilt; the offences committed by us were charged upon him; and by his voluntary undertaking to be a sacrifice for us, he came under an obligation to suffer for us, as if he had really sinned, though we only were the transgressors. This is plain in the case of those legal sacrifices, which were shadows of Christ. It appears from them, that these two sorts of guilt may be separated, so that he who is not culpably guilty may be penally guilty, and may justly suffer though he did not personally sin: for the sins of the people being laid upon these sacrifices, they were under penal guilt, and did justly suffer as if they had sinned; and yet they were not culpably guilty; for they neither had sinned, nor were they capable of sinning.

Quest. Seeing Christ offered up his sacrifice to satisfy divine jus-

tice, and he himself is God, how could he die and make satisfaction to himself?

Ans. 1. God cannot be said properly to satisfy himself; for that would be the same thing as to pardon sin simply, without any satisfaction.

2. There is a twofold consideration of Christ, one in respect of his divine nature or essence, in which sense he is both the object against which the offence is committed, and to whom for it the satisfaction is made: and there is another consideration of Christ in respect of his person, and economy or office; in which sense he properly satisfied God, seeing he was, in respect of his manhood, another and inferior to God. So he says, John xiv. 28. 'My Father is greater than I.' The blood of the man Christ Jesus is the matter of the satisfaction; the divine nature dignifies it, and makes it of infinite value.

3. It is not inconsistent with reason, that the Son of God, clothed in our nature, should by his death make satisfaction to the Deity, and consequently to himself. For in the according of two different parties, a person that belongs to one of them may interpose for reconciliation, provided that he divests his own interest, and leaves it with the party from which he comes. As for instance, let us suppose two persons, a father and a son, both possessed of the supreme power, and offended by rebellious subjects: It is not inconsistent that the Son interpose as a Mediator to restore them to the favour of the prince his father. And by this he also reconciles them to himself, and procures pardon for that offence, by which his own majesty was wronged. Now, this is a fit illustration of the great work of our redemption, so far as human things can represent divine. For all the persons of the holy Trinity were equally provoked by our sin; and to obtain our pardon, the Son, with the consent of the Father, deposits his interests in his hands, and as a Mediator intervenes between us and his Father, who in this transaction is considered as the guardian of the rights of Heaven; and having performed what divine justice required, he reconciled the world to God, i. e. to the Father, himself, and the eternal Spirit. In this case his person is the same, but his quality is different. He made satisfaction as a Mediator, and received it as God; which is no way inconsistent.

Quest. Seeing Christ really suffered for the sins of his people, whether did he suffer the same punishment that they deserved, and which the law threatened, or only something equivalent to it? It would seem that Christ did not suffer the same thing that the law threatened, and which we justly deserved for sin: for then he must

have suffered eternal death. It was not only the first, but the second death that the law threatened. Therefore Christ's temporal death did not satisfy the law and justice of God for us.

There are very learned and pious writers on both sides of this question. Yet I humbly think, that, without any inconvenience, both may be affirmed in different respects. To clear this, you would know, that the punishment which Christ endured in our stead may be considered either as to its substance or essence, or with respect to the accidental circumstances which attend it when inflicted on the damned. Now, if we consider it as to substance or essence, it was the very same which the sinner should have undergone. Man by his fall was liable to death, and to the curse and wrath of God, and Christ hath borne this in the elect's room. But if we consider it with respect to the accidental circumstances which attend it when it is inflicted on the damned, then it was not the very same, but a punishment equivalent to it. The accidental circumstances of this punishment as inflicted on the damned, are, blasphemy, rage, and an impotent fierceness of mind, which are not appointed by the law, but are only accidentals, arising from the wickedness and perverseness of their spirits. Now, our blessed Saviour was not, nor possibly could be, liable to these. The great holiness and sanctity of his person effectually secured him against all these. Besides, the punishment that is inflicted upon the damned is eternal, and attended with final despair, and the intolerable anguish of a guilty stinging conscience. This is the never-dying worm that gnaws upon their vitals. But Christ the Redeemer having no real guilt, was not liable to the worm of conscience; and his temporary sufferings were equivalent to the eternal punishment of the damned, and fully satisfactory to divine justice, on account of the infinite dignity and excellency of his person; so that he was not capable of despair.

Thus it evidently appears, that Christ offered himself a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God offended by sin. And in order to confirm your faith in this important article, one of the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, let me again call your attention to the following particulars, which I shall but barely mention.

1. Consider the necessity of this satisfaction. Without shedding of blood there is no remission, The justice of God, the nature of sin, and the sanction of the law necessarily required it. And the event manifests it; for it is not conceivable, how, if sin could have been taken away, with a bare word, the Lord would have fetched a compass by the blood of his own Son.

2. Consider the truth of it. Christ did really and truly, by the

sacrifice of himself, satisfy the justice of God for us. For he bare the punishment due to our sins, Isa. liii. 5. He died for us, in our room and stead, Rom. v. 6, 7.; and not for our good only, which may be said of all the martyrs. Compare 1 Cor. i. 13. He bought us with his blood and gave himself a ransom for our souls, and so has taken away our sins in the guilt thereof. His sufferings were the sufferings of a divine person; and so, though not infinite in duration, yet infinite in value. He was Lord of his own life.

3. Consider the perfection of it. He satisfied completely for the sins of the people. His satisfaction fully answered the demands of the justice and law of God. This is plain from the excellency of the person suffering, Col i. 19.: this the apostle testifies, Heb. x. 14. forecited; and from the discharge he got in his resurrection, and exaltation to the Father's right hand. Whatever is left to his people to suffer it is not to satisfy the justice of God, but for their correction, that they be made partakers of his holiness.

Having thus shewed that one end for which Christ offered up himself a sacrifice to God, was to satisfy his justice, I proceed,

SECONDLY, To shew that another end, as a native consequence of the other, was to reconcile elect sinners unto God. Here I shall,

1. Explain the nature of Christ's reconciliation.

2. Prove that reconciliation with God is the blessed fruit and effect of Christ's death.

2. Shew what influence the death of Christ has on this.

First, As to the nature of reconciliation, several things are implied in it. As,

1. A former friendship and favour. God and man were once in good terms. There was a time wherein they met and lovingly conversed together. When Adam dropt from the fingers of his Creator, he was the friend and favourite of Heaven. He had the law of God written on his heart, and a strong bent and inclination in his will to obey it. In that state there was no place for reconciliation: for then there was no breach between God and his creature.

2. It implies an enmity between God and man. Man fell from his primitive state of favour and friendship with Heaven, and joined issue with the devil, God's greatest enemy. Whereupon the Lord took the forfeiture of his possession, turned him out of paradise, and hindered his re-entrance by a flaming sword. There is now a dreadful war betwixt earth and heaven. Men daily rebel against God's laws, labouring to beat down his interest in the world, and employing all their powers and faculties, mercies and comforts, as weapons of unrighteousness to fight against him. And he is an enemy to them; for he hates all the workers of iniquity, and the foolish cannot stand in his sight. His wisdom, holiness, justice, and

power, stand ready charged against them, and they are liable to his eternal vengeance. This is the state wherein man stands with God on the account of sin.

3. Reconciliation with God lies in his receiving rebels into favour, and issuing forth a gracious act of indemnity for all their sins, and cancelling all those bands of guilt whereby they were bound over to eternal wrath and misery. This great blessing formally consists in his 'not imputing their trespasses unto them;' 2 Cor. v. 19. The forfeiture is taken off, and they are admitted into his former friendship and favour. Now, this is twofold; fundamental and actual.—There was a foundation laid for this reconciliation in the death of Christ. This is the mean by which it was purchased, and the chief and only ground why God lays aside his anger. 'He made peace,' says the apostle, 'by the blood of his cross.' And it is actual, when the offer of reconciliation is complied with by faith. He sends forth his ambassadors, clothed with his authority, to pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, declaring his great willingness to receive them into favour; and when men embrace the offer of reconciliation, then God actually lays aside his anger, and imputes sin no more to them.

Secondly, I proceed to prove that it is only through Christ that sinners can obtain reconciliation with God. This is clear,

1. From the holy scriptures, where this great truth is expressly declared. So it is said, Acts iv. 12. 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' And we are elsewhere told, that 'there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And he is called the Saviour of the world, not only by way of excellency, in respect of the great danger he saves us from, but by way of exclusion also, in regard of the sole designation of his person to this office, exclusive of all others. 'If ye believe not that I am he,' says he, 'ye shall die in your sins,' John viii. 24. He is the only person that was designed in all the prophecies, promises, and types. He is the only Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He is the promised seed of the woman, that was to break the serpent's head. The heart of God is fixed upon him alone, and his resolution concerning the duration of his office is immutable and unalterable. He hath summed up all the dispensations of former ages in him, Eph. i. 10. All other things were preparations to and shadows of him; God, who had various ways of communicating himself to men, hath summed up his whole will in his Son, and manifested and declared that all his transactions with men did terminate in him.

2. The truth of this doctrine will appear, that none else was ever fitted for the management of this work. God and men were to be reconciled, and none but he that was God and man in one person could be a fit day's man to lay his hand upon both. Had he been only man, he had been incapable to satisfy offended justice; and had he been only God, he had been incapable of suffering. But being God and man, he is fitted for both. Infinite satisfaction was requisite to appease the anger of God; for without this, guilt would have remained: and none else was capable to give it, but Christ, in regard of the infinite dignity and excellency of his person. It was upon no other person that the Spirit descended like a dove to furnish his human nature with all needful abilities for the discharge of his trust.

3. If we consider that none else ever did that for us which was necessary for our reconciliation with God. It was he that answered the demands of the law, and silenced the roaring of vindictive justice. He only filled up the gap that was between God and sinners. It was only Christ that interposed himself as a shelter between the wrath of God and the souls of men. The prophet Isaiah tells us, that 'he bare our griefs, and carried our sorrows, and that the chastisement of our peace was upon him.' He received into his own bowels the sword of justice that was sharpened and pointed for us. He trod the wine-press alone, and none of the people were with him. He endured the bruises of God, the darts of the devil, and the reproaches of men; and would not desist till he had laid the foundation of an everlasting peace between God and sinners.

4. If ye consider that none else was ever accepted of God but this Mediator. The legal sacrifices were not able to make the comers thereunto perfect, Heb. x. 1. They were only shadows of good things to come; Christ was the substance and complement of them all; and they were no farther regarded of God but as they were types and representations of his Son. The daily repetition of them was an undeniable evidence of their inability to effect the reconciliation of man; but the blood of Christ typified by the blood sprinkled by Moses upon the people, does it effectually. This was a sacrifice wherein God smelt a sweet savour, and was highly accepted of him.

Thirdly, It remains to shew you what Christ did in bringing about this reconciliation.

1. He undertook this work in the eternal transaction that was between the Father and him, as I have shown you formerly at large.

2. He purchased reconciliation by his death, and thereby pro-

cured the egress of the divine favour to man. This was the prime article in the covenant of grace, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,' Isa. liii. 10. God required this sacrifice exclusive of all others, which were entirely useless for the satisfaction of justice, though fit to prefigure the grand sacrifice that God intended. It was by the death of Christ alone that reconciliation was purchased to men, Rom. v. 10. Eph. ii. 13. and Col. i. 21. And when he was upon the cross he cried, 'It is finished;' that is, the work of redemption is accomplished, reconciliation is purchased, I have done all that was appointed for me to do, the articles on my part are now fulfilled, there remain no more deaths for me to suffer.

4. He brings about an actual reconciliation between God and sinners by virtue of his efficacious intercession, Heb. vii. 25. His advocacy in heaven is the gracious spring of all divine communications. It is by this that he deals with God in the behalf of men; he leads every believer by the hand as it were unto the gracious presence of God, bespeaking acceptance for them after this manner: 'Father, here is a poor creature that was born in sin, and hath lived in rebellion all his days; he hath broken all thy laws, and deserves all thy wrath; yet he is one of that number that thou gavest me before the world began; and I have made full payment to thy justice by my blood for all his debt; and now I have opened his eyes to see the sinfulness and misery of his condition: I have broken his heart for his rebellions against thee and bowed his will into obedience to the offer of thy grace: I have united him to me by faith, as a living member of my mystical body: and now, since he is mine by regeneration, let him also become thine by a special acceptation: since thy justice is satisfied for his sins, let thine anger also be turned away, and receive him graciously into favour.' In a word, the reconciliation of every elect person with God, is actually brought about by Christ: He opens their eyes, and lets them see their sin and danger: he beats down the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills, and brings up their hearts to a full compliance with the offers of peace made in the gospel; and he leads them to God, and makes their persons and duties acceptable to him. Hence it is said, Eph. i. 6. 'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

Before I proceed to the consideration of the second part of Christ's priestly office, namely, his intercession. I shall make some improvement of the doctrine of his satisfaction.

1. Here we may see the horrid and hateful evil of sin, which no other sacrifice could expiate but the blood of the Son of God. As the strength of a disease is known and seen by the quality and force

of the medicine that is made use of to cure it, and the virtue of a commodity by the greatness of the price that it laid down to buy it; so is the matter here. The sufferings and death of Christ express the evil of sin far above the severest judgments that ever were inflicted upon any creature. The dying groans of our blessed Redeemer set forth the horrid nature of sin, and loudly proclaim how hateful it is in the eye of an infinitely pure and holy God. How much evil must there be in sin that made Christ to groan and bleed to death to take it away! It is strange to imagine how rational agents should dare to commit such an evil, so freely and openly, and that for trifles and perishing vanities, which are of no continuance and duration. Can they escape, or can they possibly endure, the wrath and vengeance of an incensed Deity? If God spared not his own Son, when he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, how shall sinners escape, who are deeply and universally defiled? Can they encounter with the fury of the Almighty, the very apprehensions of which made Christ's soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death? Have they patience to endure and bear that for ever, which was intolerable for Christ to bear but for a few hours, who had all the strength of the Deity to support him? If it was so with the green tree, what shall become of the dry, when exposed to the fiery trial? O what prodigious madness is it for men to drink iniquity like water, as a harmless thing, when it is a poison so dangerous and deadly, that the least drop of it brings certain ruin? What desperate and monstrous folly is it to have slight apprehensions of that which is attended with the first and second death; even with all the terrors and torments of hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; where misery will continue in its full extremity, while eternity runs its endless course! Nothing but unreasonable infidelity and want of thought can make men venturous to provoke the living God, who is infinitely sensible of their sins, and who both can and will most terribly punish them for ever.

2. This lets us see the strictness and inexorable severity of divine justice, that required satisfaction equivalent to the desert of sin. All the other demonstrations of it which God hath given to the world, are nothing to this. God spared not his own Son. The fountain of divine mercy stopt its course, and would not let out one drop to Christ in the day of his extreme sorrow and sufferings. The Father of mercies saw his dear Son sweating great drops of blood in a cold night, and crying out with a mournful accent, 'O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' and yet he would not grant the request. O the inflexible severity of divine justice! What will ye do, sinners, when it falls upon you in hell? If the blessed

Son of God cried so out, what will become of you? How will impenitent sinners roar and yell for ever under the dreadful strokes of incensed justice! O what a dreadful thing must it be to fall into the hands of the living God!

3. See here the wonderful love of Christ to poor miserable sinners, and his great desire for the salvation of their souls. His love here passeth knowledge. It infinitely transcends the reach of the most illuminated understanding. What Christ suffered from his birth to his death on the accursed tree, affords the most striking instance of his great love to poor sinners. No example of such love can be found among men. This matchless love of Christ should inflame our hearts to sing, as Rev. i. 5, 6. 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'

4. This doctrine affords us the strongest assurance that can be, that God is willing to pardon our sins, and to be reconciled to us. There is in the natural conscience of man, when opened by a piercing conviction, such a quick sense of guilt, and of God's avenging justice, that it can never have an entire confidence in his mercy till justice be atoned. From hence the convinced sinner is restlessly inquisitive how to find out the way of reconciliation with a holy and righteous God. Thus he is represented inquiring by the prophet, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' The scripture tells us, that some consumed their children in the fire, to render their idols propitious to them: but all these means were ineffectual, their most costly sacrifices were only food for the fire; nay, instead of expiating their old sins, they committed new ones by them, and were so far from appeasing, that they inflamed the wrath of God by their cruel oblations. But in the gospel there is the most rational and easy way propounded for the satisfaction of divine justice, and the justification of man. Hence says the apostle, Rom. x. 6, 7, 9. 'The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' The apostle here sets forth the care

and anxiety of an awakened conscience. He is at a loss to find out a way to escape deserved judgment: for such things as are on the surface of the earth or floating on the waters are within our view, and may easily be obtained; but those which are above our understandings to discover, or our power to obtain, are proverbially said to be in the heavens above, or in the depths beneath; and it is applied here to the different ways of justification by the law and by the gospel. The law propounds life upon an impossible condition. But the gospel clearly reveals to us, that Christ hath performed all that was necessary to our justification, and that by a true faith we shall have an interest in it. Christ's ascension into heaven is a convincing proof, that the propitiation for our sins is perfect; for otherwise he had not been received into God's sanctuary, and admitted into the sacred place. Therefore to be under anxious and perplexing inquiries how we may be justified, is to deny the value of Christ's righteousness, and the truth of his ascension. By virtue of the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, the soul is not only freed from the fear of God's wrath, but hath a lively hope of his favour and love. This is expressed by the apostle, Heb. xii. 23. when he reckons among the privileges of believers, that they are *come to God*, &c. The apprehensions of God as the righteous Judge of the world, strike the guilty creature with dread and terror; but is sweetened by Christ the Mediator, we may approach unto him with a humble and holy confidence.

5. We must lay hold on this sacrifice, if we would be saved. This is the only sacrifice that satisfied offended justice, and no other could do it. Therefore we must have recourse to this, if we would have peace with God. Under the law the people were to be sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice; and so must we be with the blood of Christ. It is said, Exod. xxiv. 8. that 'Moses took the blood of the covenant, and sprinkled it on the people.' This signified the sprinkling of their consciences with the blood of Christ, and their obtaining redemption, justification, and access to God, through it alone. Hence our Saviour is described by this part of his office, Isa. lii. 15. 'He shall sprinkle many nations.' Our guilt cannot but look upon God as a consuming fire, without a propitiatory sacrifice. All our services are lame and defective, impure and imperfect, so that they will rather provoke God's justice, than merit his mercy. We must therefore have something to put a stop to a just fury, expiate an infinite guilt, and perfume our unsavoury services, and render them acceptable to a holy and righteous God; and that is only the sacrifice of Christ. This is full of all necessary virtue to save us: but the blood of it must be sprinkled upon our

souls by faith. Without this we shall remain in our sins, under the wrath of God, and exposed to the sword of divine justice; and our misery will be heightened by our having the offers of Christ and his grace. O! it is a fearful thing for men to have this sacrifice pleading against them, and this precious blood crying for vengeance from heaven upon them; as innocent Abel's blood cried to heaven for vengeance against the unnatural cruelty of his wicked and inhumane brother.

6. Hence see that God will never seek satisfaction for sin from those that are in Christ Jesus. He gave full and complete satisfaction to the law and justice of God for all the wrongs and injuries done thereto by the sins of men, the sufferer being God, and his divine nature stamping an infinite value upon them. Now, if the creditor receives full satisfaction for an offence done, or complete payment of a debt due, by a debtor, from the hands of a surety, neither law nor justice will permit him to ask any further satisfaction or payment from the principal debtor. He can raise no suit or action against the debtor, in regard he has fully satisfied him by the action and deed of his surety. Law and justice are fully satisfied by the obedience and satisfaction of Christ substituting himself in the room of sinners, and making his soul an offering for them, so as they can crave no more: therefore there can be no condemnation to those that are in him, and have taken the benefit of his satisfaction, and present it to God, as theirs, performed in their room and stead. Hence the apostle says, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' O seek to have your station in Christ, and so you shall be placed beyond the reach of condemnation. You may indeed, though in Christ, suffer chastisements and corrections; yet these are the corrections and chastisements of a Father, not of a Judge; and intended for your good, to cause you forsake sin, and enhance the value of the sacrifice of Christ, and not for satisfaction to justice, whose highest demands have been fully satisfied by the Surety in your room.

7. Hence see the certainty of salvation to, and that God will bestow all the benefits purchased by Christ on, those who believe. Christ has fully satisfied justice for all those whom he represented as a Mediator; so that it has nothing to demand of the Surety, nor of those whose persons he sustained in that undertaking. Hence their salvation is infallibly secured; and justice is bound to accomplish it. Mercy pleads for it; justice fully satisfied cannot dispute the validity of the claim, and cheerfully consents to their acquittal from guilt and condemnation. Thus righteousness and peace kiss each other in the absolution of the guilty sinner that believeth in Jesus.

8. Bless God for the gospel, that discovers unto us this infallible way of being delivered from condemnation and wrath, this sure way to peace and reconciliation with God, this precious balm for a troubled conscience, and this effectual remedy for appeasing an angry God. O prize the gospel, and the precious discoveries thereof, in which all blessings are contained; and accept of a slain Saviour as your only Redeemer from sin and wrath, from hell and condemnation; and glory in his cross, and what he hath done for your redemption and deliverance.

Of Christ's Intercession.

The second part of our Lord's priestly office is his interceding for his people, viz. all those for whom he satisfied divine justice. As his intercession is founded upon his making satisfaction to law and justice for their sins, and plainly supposes his having offered himself a sacrifice in their name and stead, so the objects thereof must be the same. As he died only for those for whom he intercedes, so he intercedes for none but such as he shed his precious blood for, as has been shewn in the preceding part of this discourse.

In discoursing further from this point, I shall shew,

1. The different periods of our Lord's intercession.
2. Wherein his intercession consists.
3. The necessity of it.
4. Deduce an inference or two.

First, We may consider the periods of our Lord's intercession. And this may be taken up in a threefold period of time wherein it was made, viz. before his incarnation, during the state of his humiliation, and now in his exalted state.

1. Christ interceded for his church and people before his manifestation in the flesh. Though this office be most eminently performed since the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, yet it was also effectually performed by him before his assumption of our flesh. He interposed then by virtue of his engagement to make his soul an offering for sin; and he intercedes now by virtue of his actual performance of that engagement. 'As he was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' so by that same reason he was an advocate pleading from the foundation of the world. It was through the merciful interposition of the Son of God, in consequence of the covenant betwixt the Father and him, that deserved vengeance came not upon the world for sin at the first commission of it. We find him in the Old Testament pleading for the church long before he assumed the human nature, Zech. i. 12.

and the saints making use of Christ's name in their prayers to God long before he was born, Dan. ix. 17. Thus his intercession began in heaven thousands of years before his abode on earth.

2. He interceded for his people in his state of abasement and humiliation, Heb. i. 7. 'In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications to God with strong cries and tears.' This manner of intercession was suitable and congruous to his abased state. Though he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; yet his intercession was not less prevalent with God, for 'he was heard in that he feared.' Ye may see with what majesty and authority he prayed on the behalf of all the elect, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' Yea, even when he was under the sharpest agonies, when he was bruised by God, and broken by men, groaning under the wrath of the one, and the wrongs of the other, he forgets not to put up petitions for his crucifiers, Luke xxiii. 34. 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And many of those who imbrued their hands in his innocent blood, obtained a gracious pardon through his prevalent intercession.

3. He is pleading now for his people in heaven, in his exalted state. When he had offered up himself a sacrifice on the cross, he ascended into the most holy place, and there prosecutes the same suit that he had commenced on the earth. Hence says the apostle, Rom. viii. 34. 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Secondly, I am to shew wherein Christ's intercession consists.

1. He does not plead for his people in heaven, in such a supplicatory and humble manner as he prayed for them when he was on the earth. He falls not down upon his knees with a deep prostration of soul, lifting up his eyes with tears and strong cries. Such humble prayers and supplications were suited only to the days of his flesh, when he appeared in the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness of man; but they do not become him now in his state of glory, when he is stript of all those natural infirmities and marks of indigence wherewith he was clothed in the world. But, positively,

2. His intercession lies in the following things.

1*st*, In his appearing in heaven in his people's nature, and on their account. After he had shed his precious blood on the earth for the expiation of their sin, he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven as their Advocate and Intercessor, that, by the

virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, he might answer all the charges brought in against them, and sue out all the good things that belonged to them, Heb. ix. 24. 'Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.'

2dly, In presenting the memorials of his death and passion as a moving plea on their account. This was typified and prefigured by the high priest's carrying the blood of the sacrifice into the most holy place, and presenting it before the Lord. He was not to go in before the mercy-seat without it; and there was no interceding but by virtue of it. So the whole power and efficacy of Christ's intercession is founded upon his meritorious sufferings. His soul that was bruised and made an offering for sin, and his body that was wounded and broken upon the cross, are daily presented before God, and will remain in the divine presence for ever, as an eternal memorial of his bloody sufferings. This has a powerful efficacy in prevailing with God. Hence, by an usual figure, an interceding voice is attributed to his blood, Heb. xii. 24. 'It speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Christ's blood speaks, though not vocally and with oral expressions, yet powerfully and efficaciously. It speaks in the same manner that Abel's blood did, though not for the same end; this cried for vengeance upon wicked Cain that shed it; but that pleads for mercy and favour to all believing sinners. We have a rare illustration of the efficacious intercession of Christ in heaven, in the famous story of Amyntas, who appeared as an advocate for his brother Æschylus, who was strongly accused, and in great danger of being condemned to die. This Amyntas having performed great services for the state, and merited highly of the commonwealth, in whose service one of his hands was cut off in battle, comes into the court on his brother's behalf, and said nothing, but only lifted up his arm, and shewed them an arm without a hand; which so moved them, that immediately they acquitted his brother. And thus you have Christ represented visionally, Rev. v. 6. as standing between God and us, 'And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.' That is, he was represented as bearing in his glorified body the marks of his death and sacrifice; the wounds which he received for his people's sins on the earth, are as it were still visible and fresh in heaven, as a prevailing argument with the Father to give forth the mercies that he pleads for to them.

3dly, In presenting his will and desire to the Father on their behalf, not in a humble and supplicatory manner, in the way of char-

ity, but by a claim in the way of justice. He now pleads that his people may be put in full possession of all the blessings which were purchased for them by his bloody death. We find him pleading to this purpose immediately before his passion, John xvii. 24. forecited. He minds the Father as it were of the covenant that was between them both, of his performing the condition required on his part, and so claims the performance of God's promise as a debt due to his meritorious obedience even unto death. He hath 'made his soul an offering for sin;' and therefore pleads that he may 'see his seed, prolong his days,' and that 'the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in his hands,' Isa. liii. 10, 11.

4*thly*, In his presenting his people's prayers and petitions unto God and pleading that they may be accepted and granted for his sake. Their prayers and religious performances are both impure and imperfect; but his precious merit, applied by his powerful intercession, purifies and perfects them. This skilful Advocate puts them into form and language suited to the methods of the court of heaven, and by his great interest there procures them a speedy hearing. This was excellently typified by the high priest's going in before the Lord with the blood of the sacrifice, and his hands full of incense. After he had offered the sacrifice, without, he was to take his hands full of those aromatic drugs of which the incense was composed, without the vail, and put them in a censer of gold full of fire, and cover the mercy-seat with the fumes of it. This was a figure of Christ's intercession and offering up his people's sacrifices to God. He is the alone altar upon which our sacrifices must ascend before the Lord with a grateful fume: the incense of his merit must be added to our prayers, to make them ascend before the mercy-seat as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. Hence he is represented, Rev. viii. 3, as an angel standing at the golden altar which was before the throne, with a golden censer in his hand, offering up the prayers of all the saints, perfuming them with the incense that was given him. By the *much incense* mentioned here, we are to understand the mighty quantity of merit and the great power of his intercession, which was a sweet savour to all his people's sacrifices, and renders them acceptable to God.

5*thly*, In his answering all the bills of indictment which are brought in against them. Many times a believer is brought in as an arraigned criminal before the divine tribunal, where Satan appears as the accuser, brings in the charge of sin, pleads the righteousness of the law, solicits for judgment upon his accusations, and for the execution of the curse due to the crime. The justice of God calls for vengeance, and conscience thunders out nothing but hell

and wrath. Now, while the believer is in these dismal circumstances, Christ steps in and answers the charge. He pleads the efficacy of his merit against the greatness of the believing sinner's crimes, and his satisfaction to justice by the death of the cross against all the demands and challenges of the law. And thus the sentence of condemnation due unto the sinner for his sin is averted, and a sentence of absolution is pronounced, upon the merit and plea of this powerful Intercessor. Hence we find the apostle glorying in this, Rom. viii. 33, 34. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Satan may accuse believers; but Christ can soon silence him. Thus, when Joshua the high priest stood before the Lord in filthy garments, Satan stood at his right hand to accuse him; but the angel, namely, the angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, interposed, saying, 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan,' Zech. iii. 1, 2. Though their garments be filthy, yet Christ can take them away, and clothe them with change of raiment. Though Satan be always ready to resist them, yet Christ stands always at the right-hand of God in heaven, to plead for them, and silence Satan.

Thirdly, I shall shew some of the grounds or reasons of our High Priest's intercession.

1. Christ intercedes for his people, because he had a commission, a call, and command from the Father, for this purpose. Is. xlii. 6. 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness.' So far was our mighty intercessor from engaging in this service as an intruder or usurper, that he entered upon it under the warrant of Heaven's commission. The Lord called him to be a priest. For verily 'he glorified not himself, to be made an High priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee,' Heb. v. 5. And as the Lord called him to be a priest, so to all the acts of the priestly office. He called him to make his soul an offering for sin, to pour out his life unto death, and to shed his blood for the satisfaction of offended justice. In a word, he called him to make intercession for transgressors. For says the Lord, 'I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me.'

2. He intercedes for his people, because they were given him for this end, John xvii. 6. 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' The elect that the Father gave to Christ were his own three ways. They were creatures, and therefore their life and being were derived from him. They were criminals, and therefore their life and being were forfeited to him. They were chosen, and therefore their liv-

ing and being were designed for him. They were given to Christ that the election of grace might not be frustrated, that none of the little ones might perish. Yea they were given him, that the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; for they were given him as his seed, in whom he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, and consequently might not spend his strength and shed his blood in vain. Now, because the elect were thus given to Christ, therefore he intercedes for them, John xvii. 9, 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.

3. He intercedes for his people, because it is a special part of his priestly office to do so. As the high priest under the law was not only to slay and offer the sacrifice in the outer part of the tabernacle, on the anniversary day of expiation, but to enter with the fresh blood into the sanctuary, and sprinkle it seven times; and not only so, but was to bring a censer full of burning coals off the altar, with incense in his hands, to be put upon the fire before the Lord within the vail, that so the cloud in the incense might cover the mercy-seat: in like manner, after our great High Priest had offered himself a sacrifice to God in his bloody death, he entered into heaven, not only with his blood, but with the incense of his prayers, as a cloud about the mercy-seat, to preserve by his life the salvation which he had purchased by his death. Hence the apostle assures us, that our salvation depends upon his intercession, and his intercession upon his priesthood, Heb. vii. 24, 25. 'This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

4. He intercedes for his people, because he was their propitiation; for the efficacy of his plea depends upon the value and virtue of his sacrifice. As the high priest under the law could not enter into the holy of holies, till by the slaying of the sacrifice he had blood to carry with him: so no more could our Priest be admitted to solicit at the throne of grace, till by his death he had satisfied the tribunal of justice. Thus, because he paid the debt as our Surety, he is fit to plead the payment as our Attorney. What he finished on earth, he continually presents in heaven. By shedding his blood he made expiation, and by presenting it he makes intercession. In the one he prepared the remedy, and in the other he applies it.

5. He intercedes for his people, because his doing so is one of the great ends of his ascension and session at the right hand of God. In his incarnation he came down from the Father to acquaint us with his gracious purposes, and how far he had agreed with God in

our behalf; and at his ascension he went from us to the Father, to sue out the benefits which he had so dearly purchased. He drew up an answer upon the cross to the bill that sin, by virtue of the law, had drawn against us, and ascended to heaven as an Advocate to plead that answer upon his throne, and to rejoin to all the replies against it. And therefore the apostle tells us, that he is 'entered into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24.

6. He intercedes for his people, because of that matchless and amazing love which he bears to them. He loves them with a love infinitely transcending the reach of human or angelic conception; he loves them with a love that knows neither height nor depth, breadth nor length, but is absolutely incomprehensible. His love to them brought him down from heaven, and made him willingly undergo all those sorrows and sufferings, which like impetuous torrents poured in upon him. And certainly, seeing in his love and in his pity he purchased eternal redemption for them, he will never cease to plead for the application of it to them. Seeing in such plentiful streams he shed his precious blood to save them, it is not to be imagined that he will spare his prayers for them.

7. He intercedes for his people, because this service of love is that wherein he takes the greatest delight and pleasure. Before time existed, his delights were with the sons of men; and when the fulness of time did dawn, he said, 'Lo, I come,' &c. He had a delight to live with the sons of men, and to die for them. And no sooner does he enter heaven after his death and resurrection, but there he delights to act on their account, to plead their cause, and to intercede for all the blessings of his purchase to them. This is the will of the Father, and he delights to do it.

I conclude all with an inference or two.

1. How wonderful is the love of God in appointing an Intercessor for us, not an angel, but his own beloved Son! Were we left to ourselves, and to our own pleas, our least sins would ruin us, and all the grounds of intercession we could plead upon would be rejected, as unworthy of acceptance before the throne of God.

2. How wonderful is the love of our Redeemer, in condescending to act so friendly a part to us, notwithstanding all our unworthiness and foul miscarriages against him! How should it fill our hearts with wonder, that he who is our Judge, should take upon him to manage our cause in the court of heaven; that he who has a mouth to condemn us, and wrath to consume us for our sins, should bind the arms of his wrath, and employ his tongue to solicit our cause in the court of heaven; that he who has a mouth to condemn us, and wrath to consume us for our sins, should bind the arms of his

wrath, and employ his tongue to solicit our cause and procure us the richest blessings!

3. Then true believers have a friend in the court of heaven, who is agenting their cause, managing their concerns, and will make all things work together for their good. Whatever their cause be, and however fearful they may be about the issue of it, all shall go right at length, through the interest of their mighty Intercessor.

4. Believers cannot finally miscarry, and utterly fall away: for they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Their Redeemer ever liveth to make intercession for them. So that neither their own sins, nor all the temptations of Satan, nor the frowns or allurements of the world, shall ever prevail to make them fall from their steadfastness, or from the favour of God: for Christ, as their High Priest, hath died for their sins, and will never intermit his suits to God in their behalf till they be safely brought to glory.

5. *Lastly*, Employ the Lord Jesus Christ as your High Priest, to bring you to God, depending on his merit as the ground of the expiation of your guilt, and giving you a title unto eternal life. And make use of him as your Advocate with the Father, to procure you all the blessings you stand in need of for time and eternity.

OF CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

PSALM ii. 6.—*Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.*

THE New Testament leaves us no ground to doubt of our Lord Jesus Christ being the person here spoken of, as several passages in this psalm are expressly therein applied to him. The words contain a direct assertion of Christ's being appointed King of Zion, his spiritual kingdom—Therein we have,

1. His office: He is a *King*, invested with all regal power and princely authority: being 'King of kings, and Lord of lords;' yea 'the Prince of the kings of the earth.' And this name he hath written on his vesture and on his thigh, Rom. xix. 16.

2. His kingdom, over which he rules, the *holy hill of Zion;* which was an eminent type of the gospel-church, and is called *holy*, because the temple, the house of God was built upon it.

3. His right to this kingdom; *I have sent him my King*, says Jehovah. The Father hath placed him in that office, giving him, as

God-man, Mediator, 'all power in heaven and in earth.' He is 'given to be Head over all things to the church.'

4. The stability of this kingdom against all attempts made to oppose or destroy it, *Yet have I set my King*, &c.—Though enemies roar and rage, and leave no means unessayed to hinder the erection and establishment thereof; yet all their plots shall be unsuccessful, and all their deliberations shall miscarry. I have set him as King, and will maintain his throne.

The doctrinal proposition arising from the words is,

Doct. 'Christ executes the Office of a King.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. That Christ is a King.

II. What sort of a kingdom the kingdom of Christ is.

III. The acts of his kingly office.

IV. The properties of this King.

V. *Lastly*, Deduce some inferences for application.

I. I am to shew that our Lord Jesus Christ is a King. This will appear, if ye consider,

1. That he was prophesied of in the Old Testament under this character. Thus old Jacob on his death-bed says of him, Gen. xlix. 10. 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.' And says the evangelical prophet, Isa. xi. 1, 2, 3. 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.'

2. That he was of old promised to his people under this notion: Isa. ix. 6, 7. 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. Zech. ix. 9, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the fole of an ass.' Micah v. 2. 'Out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel.' He is called *the King* by way of eminency, Cant. i. 4. 'The King hath brought me into his banqueting-house.' Ezek.

xxxiv. 24. 'I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them.' That he should be a King, was declared to his mother, by the angel, before his conception in her womb, Luke i. 32, 33. 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' And hence he is called 'King of kings, and lord of lords.' Rev. xvii. 14.

3. That he has all the ensigns of royalty. He has a sword: hence it is said, Psal. xlv. 3. 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou Most Mighty.' By this we are to understand the word of God, which is the great instrument by which he maintains and propagates the glory and honour of his kingdom in the world.—A sceptre, which is another badge of royal majesty, Heb. i. 8. 'A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' By this we are to understand his Spirit, which he puts forth in the government of the world, and in his operations of grace in the hearts of his people, guiding and conforming them, through his word and ordinances, to the holy will of God.—A crown: It is said, Rev. vi. 2. that 'a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.' And we read of a crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, Cant. iii. 11.—An escutcheon or coat of arms: He bears the lion in his arms; hence called 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah,' Rev. v. 5; which imports that he should be a great conqueror and a victorious King.—A throne, Heb. i. 8. 'Thy throne O God, is for ever and ever.—Subjects, over whom he rules, even all the creatures in heaven and in earth, Psal. ii. 9. 'His kingdom ruleth over all,' Psal. ciii. 19. All the angels of heaven have taken the oath of allegiance to him, Heb. i. 6. 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' More especially he rules in the church. God the Father has set the crown on his head, and he holds it by immediate tenure from Heaven.—He enacts laws, which all his subjects are bound to obey. His laws are contained in his word, and they reach both the outward and the inward man.

4. That he sealed this truth with his precious blood.—When Pilate asked him, 'Art thou a King then?' he answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a King.' To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world. On this account it is said of him, that 'before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession,' 1 Tim. vi. 13.

From all which it is evident, that our Lord Jesus is a King. Yea, he is King of kings, and hath a pre-eminence over them all; and therefore he is called 'the Prince of the kings of the earth.' And indeed he must needs be so; for it is by him that kings reign

and princes decree justice.—They all hold their crowns by immediate tenure from this great King. And he infinitely outvies them all; having the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession.

II. I proceed to shew the nature of Christ's kingdom, or what sort of a kingdom it is. Christ has a twofold kingdom.

1. An essential kingdom. He is Lord and King over all the creatures by nature, inasmuch as he is the eternal Son of God, equal with his Father in all things. In this respect he has a universal empire, which extends over all things in heaven and earth, yea and to hell itself. He is the sole Monarch of the whole world; and all the princes and potentates of the earth are but his vicegerents that govern under, and should rule for him. He is 'the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,' as the apostle styles him, 1 Tim. vi. 15.

2. He has an economical or Mediatory kingdom. Originally the kingdom belongs to him as God, and derivatively it belongs to him as God-man and Mediator. He is constituted King by divine appointment and institution, *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.* He is invested with authority over all the creatures; hence it is said, Eph. i. 22. 'God hath put all things under his feet.' He rules from sea to sea, and to the ends of all the earth, yea to the utmost bounds of God's creation. 'He hath given him power over all flesh,' as this King himself says, John xvii. 2. All things are subject to his government, and ready to fulfil his pleasure, when he issues his word of command.

The church is his peculiar and special kingdom. God 'hath given him to be head over all things to the church,' Eph. i. 22. This kingdom is a spiritual kingdom: hence he says, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' John xviii. 36. The king thereof appeared not in worldly pomp and grandeur, attended with a splendid equipage, surrounded with armed guards, or having a brilliant and magnificent court, but in spiritual splendor, suited to the nature of his kingdom, Zech. ix. 9. forecited. His throne is in the heavens, not on earth, Psal. cx. 1. His sceptre is a spiritual one, the word of God, which he wields for the good of his people; it is the rod of his strength, which he sends out of Zion, and by the instrumentality of it he makes them willing in the day of his power, Ps. cx. 2, 3. Compare Isa. ii. 3. 'Out of Zion shall go forth a law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' The subjects of this kingdom are spiritual men, born of God, begotten of the word of truth, the incorruptible seed of the word, John i. 12. The way of its administration is spiritual, reaching neither men's bodies nor purses, but their

consciences; 'the weapons' of it 'not being carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds,' 2 Cor. x. 4. Its laws are spiritual, reaching the innermost parts of the heart; and the benefits of it are spiritual, righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost,' &c.

The administration of his government with respect to this kingdom is either external or internal.

1, It is external; and that again is either more general, or more particular. (1.) More general, in the course of his providence. He as Mediator has a providential influence on all the affairs of this world, ordering and determining them to the special benefit and interest of his people. Hence it is that all things work together for the good of those who love God. We have an admirable scheme of divine providence in Ezek. i. There you may see how all the wheels, i. e. motions and revolutions here in this inferior world, are guided and directed by the Spirit that is in them; and in verse 26. it is all run up into the supreme cause: there you find one like the Son of Man, which is Jesus Christ, sitting upon the throne, and giving forth orders for the government of all. (2.) It is more particular, in his appointing laws, ordinances, and officers, in his church, to manage and govern it, and to inflict censures upon scandalous offenders.

2. It is internal, in the hearts of his people. He subdues them to himself in a day of power, writes his laws upon their hearts, and rules and governs them. In this respect it is said, Luke xvii. 21. 'The kingdom of God is within you.' There he sits enthroned King, and sways his royal sceptre. But more of this anon.

III. The acts of Christ's kingly office may be reduced to these heads, viz. subduing sinners to himself, ruling and governing them, defending and protecting them, restraining his own and their enemies, and conquering them. Of each of these I shall treat in order.

First, Christ exercises his kingly office in subduing a people to himself, making them willing in the day of his power to submit to his authority and sceptre, Psal. cx. 3. and so subjecting them to him as willing subjects. For this end consider,

1. That the great design of Christ's kingly office as Mediator is to raise up to himself a kingdom in the bowels of the kingdoms of the earth, Acts xv. 14. and to make the subjects of men the subjects of the divine Mediator. So that those who will not allow a spiritual kingdom within a temporal one, refuse Christ to be King.

2. Our Lord has a right to this kingdom, having purchased it with his blood, Acts xx. 28. He comes not without a title to conquer, but has the title of his Father's gift and his own purchase.

Ere he could attain to the possession of this kingdom, he behoved to swim through a sea of bloody sufferings, and he purchased every subject with the immense price of his precious blood. Thus his title is indefeasible.

3. Though our Lord has this just right to the kingdom, yet his subjects have sworn allegiance to the Prince of darkness, and are in actual rebellion against him. That is the common character of them, which we have Tit. iii. 3. 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' And they will never yield to him, till they be overcome by his mighty power. He gets no subjects but by stroke of sword, and the exertion of the same power that was put forth in his own resurrection.

4. Christ as a King doth by power overcome them at length, and makes them willingly submit to him, renounce obedience to the devil, the world, and their own base lusts, his enemies, and causes them cheerfully stoop to the yoke of his obedience, and to say, as Isa. xxvi. 13. 'O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.'

5. The weapons wherewith Christ subdues his subjects are his word and Spirit, whereby they are effectually convinced of their sin and rebellion, and reduced to subjection to him. The word is the rod of his power, by which he has subdued nations to himself. It was by this word that in the primitive times he overturned the empire of the devil, silenced the heathen oracles, and demolished the Pagan idolatrous worship. And because the word comes to many without the Spirit, therefore Christ has many subjects in appearance only, mere pretenders to loyalty to him; they are really the subjects of Satan, and only feign submission to Zion's King. But where the Spirit comes with the word, there the heart is subjected to Chirst in very deed, 2 Cor. x. 4; and Christ has a kingdom not only among them, but within them.

Secondly, Christ exercises his kingly office in ruling and governing his subjects. No kingdom can be without a government; and Christ's kingdom must needs be an orderly kingdom, which he himself governs as the supreme Head and Monarch. Now,

1. Forasmuch as the church is a visible society on earth, whose head is in heaven, Christ governs them externally.

(1.) Giving them laws according to which they are to demean themselves every way towards God and towards their neighbour, Isa. xxxii. 22. 'The Lord is our Lawgiver.' Those laws which are the laws of the kingdom of Christ, are written in the Bible, and are

a transcript of his perfections, and derive all their authority and vigour from him alone, and not from the church, or any body of men whatever. And none have power to add to or diminish from the laws of this great King.

(2.) He gives them officers in whose hands he has lodged this government who are to be accountable to him for their administration, on whom they depend, and from whom they derive their power. These are neither Pope nor prelates, none of these being officers of Christ's appointment; nor yet the civil magistrate, who as such is not so much as a member of the church; and while there were no magistrates but what were enemies to the church and the cause of Christ, yet Christ appointed a government therein; as appears from 1 Cor. xii. 28. 'God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.' But these officers are preaching and ruling elders; as is clear from what the apostle says, 1 Tim. v. 17. 'Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.'

(3.) He gives discipline and censures to controul the unruly, and check the scandalous, and keep the society clean; to which all that own Christ as a King ought to be subject, who rules his people by church discipline, as well as teaches them by the ministry of men. This appears from what our Lord himself says, Mat. xviii. 17, 18. 'If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.'

2. But seeing Christ is God, and his laws reach the inner man, which lies open to no other but himself, he governs his people internally.

(1.) Writing his law in their hearts, in consequence of the divine promise, Heb. viii. 10. holding forth their duty to them by an inward evidence, making them to know what his will and pleasure is, that they may obey it from the heart. Hence he says, Isa. xxx. 21, 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.'

(2.) He powerfully inclines and over-rules them by his Spirit unto obedience, while he sits at the helm, and steers the ship of the soul what way he will, Acts xx. 22. To which we may add,

(3.) Those secret rewards and corrections which are sent from his

own hand; while he bestows on them spiritual comforts and soul-feasts when in the way of their duty, and gives them such strokes for their correction, even for secret faults, as may let them see, that though their King be in heaven, yet he judges on the earth. Hence he says to the church of Pergamos, Rev. ii. 17. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.' And to the church of the Laodiceans he says, Rev. iii. 19. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.'

Thirdly, Christ executes his kingly office in defending his people. The kingdom of Christ always had and ever will have many enemies, who will continually be within bow-shot of its subjects. These enemies are the devil, the flesh, the world, and death. Christ defends against these, as a king defends his subjects.

1. By preserving his church in being, notwithstanding all the cunning and furious attempts to destroy her. Hence the bush, though it burn, will not consume. Of her he says, Isa. xxvii. 3. 'I the Lord do keep it: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' And he keeps every particular believer, so as they never totally and finally fall away, John x. 28. 'I give unto them eternal life (says he): and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.'

2. By giving them necessary support and help under all sufferings, troubles, and temptations, never leaving them, no not at the hour of death. Hence it is said, Isa. lxiii. 9. 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' 1 Cor. x. 13. 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' For this he makes use of the angels as he will, they being 'all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,' Heb. i. 14. And he can employ men, even the worst of men, in that service: hence the earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth, Rev. xii. 16.

Fourthly, Christ executes his kingly office in restraining his enemies, and those of his people. While, though their power remains with them to annoy his people, yet he sets bounds to them, over which they cannot pass; Psal. lxxvi. 10. 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee (says the Psalmist): the remainder of wrath shalt

thou restrain."—Christ has all his and his people's enemies, outward and inward, in a chain: and no further can they go than he is pleased to let out a link to them. If it were not so, all would quickly be over-run; but one jot they cannot go beyond his permission.

Fifthly and *lastly*, Christ executes his kingly office in conquering his enemies, and those of his people. This conquest is twofold. (1.) When now he takes away their power in part. Thus is the devil conquered already, that he has not all the world so at his will, and under his yoke of slavery, as before the coming of Christ, when he ruled among the nations with an unlimited sway. And thus the devil and the flesh are conquered in the day of converting grace, when the power of these enemies is broken, and the captives are delivered from the tyranny and bondage in which they were formerly held. Thus the wicked world is conquered, when their rage against the people of God is laid aside, and the church enjoys tranquillity: 'For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her, Zech. ii. 5. And death is conquered when its sting is taken away, which it is as to every believer; so that they can say, 'O death, where is thy sting?' 1 Cor. xv. 55. (2.) There is a complete conquest remaining, which will be at the last day, when Christ will gather in all his people into one glorious company, transport them into those mansions of bliss which he has prepared for them, and reign over them for ever in heaven: when all his own, and his people's enemies are utterly destroyed from the presence of God, and the glory of his power. 'For he must reign till all his enemies be put under his feet,' 1 Cor. xv. 25. Then death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, Rev. xx. 14. and the devil and all his slaves shall be shut up for ever in the infernal Tophet. This shall be the most signal display of the glorious conquests of this King, and the trophies of his victory shall be the subject of the song of the redeemed for ever.

This kingdom of Christ will be eternal, Luke i. 33. 'He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Dan. ii. 44. 'The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed,—and it shall stand for ever.' It is true the way of its present administration will cease, and so he will deliver up the kingdom to his Father, but exhibiting it as consummated and perfected. But Christ shall remain the King, Head, and Husband of his church for ever, Rev. xix. 7. and he shall be the eternal bond of union betwixt God and the saints.

IV. Let us consider some of the properties or qualities of Zion's King.

1. He is a King of ancient, glorious, and honourable extract: for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. His goings forth were of old, from everlasting. And he is God over all, blessed for ever.

2. He is an absolute king, who makes laws for his subjects, but is not bound by any himself. His will is his law, and he does without controul whatever seems good to himself in heaven and in earth. Yea, so uncontroulable is his government, that none may oblige him to render a reason of his actions. 'Who may say unto him, What dost thou?' But though Christ be an absolute monarch, yet his government is no way tyrannical, but managed according to the eternal rules of righteousness, justice, and holiness.

3. He is a wise King: for he is the wisdom of God, yea, God only wise; and therefore infinitely able to guide his subjects through all the labyrinths of danger and difficulty wherein they may be involved; while he 'teaches them in the way of wisdom, and leads them in right paths; so that when they go, their steps shall not be straitened: and when they run, they shall not stumble,' Prov. iv. 11, 12.

4. Christ is a very powerful King: for he has more than the strength of an unicorn; yea, he has an arm that is full of power, being the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in battle; and therefore infinitely able to secure his subjects against all the attempts which devils or men can make against them. Yea, so great is his strength, and so mighty is his power, that one angry blast thereof will make all his enemies to fly as chaff before the wind; and therefore he says, 'Who will set the briars and thorns against me in battle; I would go through them, I would burn them up together,' Isa. xxvii. 4.

5. Christ is a just King: 'Just and right is he.' Though clouds and darkness may be about him, yet 'justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne,' Psal. xcvii. 2. So that his government is impartially exercised, without any by-respect to the great or the small, the rich or the poor, &c. Neither the meanness of the poor and low, nor the honour and greatness of the high and noble, will incline him to do any thing in the least inconsistent with the immutable rules of perfect justice. 'He accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands,' Job xxxiv. 19.

6. Christ is a very merciful King. Mercy is the prevailing attribute of his nature, which he delights to make the children of men feel the benign effects of. Therefore he has proclaimed himself to be 'the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious.' He does not

willingly grieve nor afflict the children of men. He takes no pleasure in the blood of his most implacable and inveterate foes; and bears with a very tender hand upon his afflicted, broken, and discouraged people. For the bruised reed he will not break, nor quench the smoking flax. He heals the broken in heart, and binds up all their wounds. In all the afflictions of his people he is afflicted; and he that touches them, touches the apple of his eye.

7. Christ is a very meek and patient King. Never any in the world could have borne such indignities, or digested such affronts, as he has met with from such of his own subjects, to whom he has shewn the most distinguishing kindness. Had he not been thus patient, Judah and Ephraim had soon been unpeopled. 'As for them, they were bent to backsliding: though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him,' Hos. xi. 7. Though he sent many prophets unto them, calling upon them, and saying, 'Return, ye backsliding children,' &c. yet they did not regard them. Who after this could imagine, that this just and jealous King would have entertained one thought of kindness towards them? yet hear what he says, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together,' ver. 8.

8. Christ is a very beautiful King. His glory outshines the sun in its full strength. The united constellations of all created beauty fall infinitely short of his; for he is fairer than the children of men, yea, he is altogether lovely.

9. Christ is a most humble and condescending King: for he does not disdain to be acquainted with the meanest among the sons of men; the beggar will be as welcome to him as the prince. The poor and the rich are all one to him; and he takes as much notice of Job on the dunghill, as of David on the throne. Hear what the prophet, in the name of this great King, says, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. 'Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? for all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.'

10. Christ is a very rich and opulent King. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. He is the heir of all things. Honour and riches are with him, yea, durable riches and righteousness. So that those who are his honest and faithful subjects shall never want any thing that is good for them. Such are the immense trea-

sures and infinite riches of this glorious King, that all the ministers on earth, and all the angels in heaven, cannot possibly lay them open. For can they grasp the heavens in their arms, and the sun in the hollow of their hands? can they weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Suppose they could do all this, and a thousand times more, yet could they not give an account of the estate of this my King. So that his subjects shall never want either grace or glory.

11. He is an immortal and everlasting King. 'The heavens and the earth shall perish, but he shall endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall they be changed. But he is the same, and his years shall have no end,' Psal. cii. 26, 27. Though the best, the wisest, and the richest kings upon earth will die, and leave their subjects exposed to many inconveniences consequent on their death, yet this King of glory lives for evermore, and will rule over his subjects with justice, mercy, and righteousness, through all the ages of eternity.

It remains to make some improvement of this subject.

1. The kings of the earth have no ground to grudge the kingdom of Christ its freedom in their dominions; seeing it is a spiritual kingdom, and quite of another nature than the kingdoms of this world; and interferes not with any of the just rights and prerogatives of earthly crowns. Yet how sad is it that this kingdom should be an eye-sore to the kings of the earth, and that they should employ their power to suppress and bear it down?

2. The Pope's supremacy, and the supremacy of the magistrate over all persons, and in all causes, whereby they have been made heads of the church, is daring blasphemy against Christ, a bold usurpation of his crown and dignity, and high rebellion against him, who will not suffer the jewels to be stollen from his crown, to deck the head of any earthly power whatever, without the severest testimony of his resentment.

3. There is a government of the church distinct from and independent upon the civil government, lodged in the hands of church-officers, whereby they have a power, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to meet in judicatories, transact matters there according to the word and laws of this King, to dissolve their meetings in his name, to appoint fasts and thanksgivings, as the state of the church may require, to inflict censures on offenders, bind and loose, and to do every thing necessary for advancing this kingdom in a spiritual way, but no otherwise. And whoever presumes to hinder them in these acts of administration, or arrogate any of them to themselves, are in so far enemies to Christ and his royal prerogatives.

4. This government of the church is not alterable by any power on earth, whether civil or ecclesiastic; nor have they that are entrusted with it any power to give up the rights and privileges conferred on them by Christ to any person or persons whatsoever. If they do so, they are unfaithful to their trust, and their conduct will be highly resented another day.

5. None have power to appoint any parts of worship in the Church that Christ has not appointed. For he is the sole Lawgiver of the church, and has in his word appointed the platform of the worship which he requires of his subjects. And therefore for any to appoint ceremonies and rights of worship which bear not the stamp of his institution, act in opposition to his laws; and all their rites are useless and unprofitable. Equally culpable are those who presume to make any terms of communion, or of admission to the ordinances of the church, but such as Christ has left behind him. This is high rebellion against the King of Zion.

6. The truth of the kingdom of Christ is a solid ground of suffering, on which people may comfortably lose whatever is dear to them in the world, knowing they are in the way of their duty. And this was the ground of the sufferings of the Lord's people in the persecuting reigns before the Revolution, whose memory ought to be always regarded, for their zealous and firm adherence to the prerogatives of Christ's kingdom.

7. The church shall ride out all the storms that can blow upon her, whether from earth or hell. All plots and contrivances against her shall be defeated in the end; for her King liveth, and will never suffer the gates of hell to prevail against her. The crown shall flourish on his head, when the church's enemies shall be ruined, and their kingdoms laid by for ever.

8. However weak any poor believer be amongst many enemies, yet the broken ship shall surely come to land. The spark of grace shall be preserved amidst an ocean of difficulties and corruptions, within or without. The seed of grace sown in the heart shall be maintained, and spring up in the fruits of holiness. All Christ's honest subjects shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

9. Whoever they be that refuse subjection to the ordinances and discipline of Christ's house, do in so far reject Christ from ruling over them. Consider this, ye that neglect a regular attendance upon the ordinances of divine institution, and will not submit to discipline and censure for your scandalous, and offensive behaviour. Ye are the enemies of Zion's King, and your conduct plainly declares, that ye will not have this man to reign over you. Repent of this your rebellion, otherwise ye shall be slain as his enemies.

10. See, believers, ye that are striving against sin and Satan, and waging war with your lusts and all Christ's enemies, to whom you are to have recourse for help in all your difficulties; even to your Almighty King, who is infinitely able to help you in all straits. Make use of him daily as your King, applying and trusting to him for life, strength, defence, and victory over all your enemies.

11. *Lastly*, Ye that are strangers to Christ, captives to Satan, and under a miserable thraldom to your own lusts, will ye be persuaded to come under the sceptre and government of King Jesus; take on his yoke, and subject yourselves to him and his blessed government. For motives, consider,

(1.) The great glory and dignity of his person. He is God equal with the Father, the wonder of men and angels. The most glorious monarch that ever swayed sceptre among men, is but like a worm of the earth, or a despicable insect in the air, compared to him. All created excellencies fall under a vail, when his glory begins to shine.

(2.) He has the best right to govern your souls. The devil and your vile lusts are all usurpers. But Christ is your rightful Lord. He has an original right to you as God, and a derivative right as Mediator. He hath an unquestionable title by the grant of the Father, Acts ii. 36. 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' And he hath a right by his own merit and purchase, Rom. xiv. 9. "For this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' Ye are his, whether ye will or not. Ye are entirely at his disposal. He has more power over you than the potter has over the clay. Your own consent and willingness adds nothing to his title; but it will fearfully aggravate your sin, if ye refuse it.

(3.) Consider the misery of your condition till once ye submit to him. Ye are under a miserable bondage to the devil; ye are slaves to the prince of darkness; that spirit rules in you that worketh in all the children of disobedience. Your condition will grow still worse and worse, till it be incapable of any further addition of misery. Ye are now without God, without the promises of the covenant, without peace, without the pardon of sin, having no communion with God, or title to heaven. Ye are slaves to your sordid lusts, under the curse of the law, and condemned already. Whenever ye die out of Christ, ye shall die in your sins; and he that was your ruler and leader in this world, will be both your companion and tormentor in the world to come. O fearful condition! Can ye sleep quietly in your chains? When ye hear

that Christ was anointed by the Father to preach good tidings to the meek, to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; should not this make you sigh, nay cry, through the grates of the prison, to this glorious Deliverer who stands at the door? When ye see Christ's standard pitched in the gospel, and his glorious banner displayed there, will ye not repair to it, and list yourselves among his faithful subjects?

(4.) It is your greatest dignity to be subjects to Christ. Theodosius the Emperor thought it a greater honour to be a servant to Christ, than the head of an empire. Christ's subjects are called vessels of honour, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, &c. They are consecrated, and set apart for God, to be the objects of his special grace, and the instruments of his glory and service in the world. This advanceth them to great dignity and honour. Subject yourselves then to Christ, and ye shall arrive at the highest pinnacle of honour.

(5.) His government is most sweet and pleasant. His yoke is easy, and his burden light. His cross is better than the world's crown. Submit then to his easy sceptre.

(6.) Consider the great happiness that will attend your subjecting yourselves to Christ's government. It is introductive to every privilege, mercy, and blessing, that men can desire. By this ye will be delivered from the vassalage of Satan, the servitude of sin, the malediction of the law, and danger of the wrath to come. Let this prevail on you to submit to this King.

(7.) By this ye will put the crown upon his head, and give him the reward of his bloody death and sufferings, when ye renounce sin and Satan, and all the lusts and idols that exercised dominion over you before, and betake yourselves to him by faith, and give your hearty consent that he shall reign in your souls.

(8.) This is the design of all God's ordinances and dispensations; all the arrows in the gospel-quiver are levelled at this mark; it is the point and centre into which all these blessed lines are drawn. Submit to him, then, and disappoint not the design of all his love and grace to poor sinners.

(9.) Ye can have no saving benefit by Christ, unless ye submit to him as your King. It is through his kingly office that all his other offices are made effectual. All the blessings and benefits of his purchase are conveyed to believers this way. It is by his regal power that he changes their natures, powerfully inclines them to believe on him, and to love and obey him. If ye accept not of him as your King, ye can have no benefit by him at all. Ye must receive him as your Lord, as well as your Prophet and Priest.

(10.) *Lastly*, If ye will not stoop and bow to him, he will break you in pieces. God has settled an irreversible decree, that 'to him every knee shall bow;' and if they do it not cheerfully and willingly, they shall be made to do it with force and constraint. He has a rod of iron, and therewith he will break in pieces the mightiest potentates of the earth that will not subject themselves to him. Hence we have that counsel given them by the Spirit of God, Psal. ii. 10, 11, 12. 'Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 8.—*He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

HAVING discoursed of our Redeemer and his incarnation, and the several offices he executes under that character, I come now to treat of his amazing humiliation and abasement, to which he willingly submitted, in order to accomplish the redemption of elect sinners. The text holds forth his state of humiliation.

1. The voluntariness of it: it was no matter of force or compulsion; *He* voluntarily *humbled himself.*

2. The nature of it: it was *obedience*, viz. to the Father's will, which comprehends the whole of what Christ did and suffered for our redemption.

3. The depth of it: it was *unto death;* and he could go no lower. As for the kind of death, he humbled himself to the basest and most humiliating kind of it, *the death of the cross.* Under this is comprehended his burial, and continuing for a time under the power of death. Death had our Redeemer as low as it could carry him.

4. The continuance of this humiliation. He had a race thereof set before him, in which he continued till he came to death, as the end of it.

Christ's humiliation was a voluntary thing; he voluntarily did and suffered whatever he did and suffered for us, Psal. xl. 7. 'Lo, I come,' said he. Even in the deepest points of his humiliation, 'he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,' to oppose the

humbling treatment he was exposed to. Man fell off from God by his ambition, and therefore was Christ humbled, that he might be recovered again from his misery to the favour of God, and allegiance to him.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall consider the several parts of our Lord's humiliation, as they are laid down in the Catechism, viz. 'his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; his being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.' What a catalogue of humiliating circumstances is here, to which the Son of God was subjected from the cradle to the grave; the consideration of all which should excite us to hate sin, the fatal cause of all, and to endear to us the merciful Redeemer, who for our sake went through all this scene to accomplish our salvation.

First, The Son of God was born, and that in a low condition. Here is a wide step at first, a step from heaven to earth; which is a mystery of infinite condescension. Take this article in pieces, and behold humiliation in every point. The Son of God was humbled in his incarnation, his conception, his birth, and the circumstances attending it.

1. The Son of God became man. To see a king become a slave, and the order of angels degraded into crawling worms, would be matter of wonder; but a greater is here, viz. God not become an angel, though that would have been infinitely below him, but a man, a son of Adam, taking the likeness of sinful flesh. Hence the apostle cries out with admiration, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.' O deep humiliation! far greater than if all the creatures had been degraded to the lowest degree of existence.

2. He was conceived in the womb of a sinful woman, the virgin Mary, who, as a daughter of Adam, was certainly infected with original sin as well as the rest of his posterity. O the depth of the Son of God's humiliation! It would have been low, had the great God, the Creator of heaven and earth, purposing to become man, been created as Adam, as it were at once, and in a perfect state of manhood. But to be conceived in the womb of a woman, was yet lower. He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain as God, was as man shut up for the ordinary number of months in the womb of a woman, whom he himself had made. His body was formed not of any substance sent down from heaven, but of her's a creature, Gal. iv. 4. He was 'made of a woman;' that is, his body was formed of a part of her substance, being of the seed of David, and

of the tribe of Judah. He was born of a sinful creature, and yet without sin; the Holy Ghost having purified it from all defilement, as God alone can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, though man cannot.

3. He was born of a woman. Had there been no more about him but that he had been born of an empress, a sovereign princess, who made a great figure in the world, it would have been very wonderful: but that he was born of any woman at all, be her rank in life what it will, may well strike us with amazement. I shall say no more of this, but that our birth is such as the due consideration of it might humble us all our life; and yet to it Christ humbled himself. O the depth of his humiliation.

4. He was born in a low condition. There were several circumstances of the lowest abasement about the birth of Christ. He was not born of a great princess, seated on a splendid throne, and attended with a brilliant court, but a mean woman, though of the seed-royal of David, and married not to a mighty potentate, but a poor mechanic, a carpenter, Luke i. 48. and that not in her own house, but in that of another; not in the inn, the great house where the richer and more noble company chuse their lodging, there being no room there for him who was born King of the Jews, yea, who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, but in a stable among cattle; and when born, not clothed with embroidered or costly garments, as the children of kings use to be, but swaddled in tattered clothes, rent pieces of a garment, as the original word signifies; and laid not in a servant's bed in the stable, but in a manger, out of which the cattle eat their provender, instead of a cradle, Luke ii. 7. A far lower state of humiliation than most of the sons and daughters of Adam are reduced to. Well may we cry out with astonishment, How low, O Son of God, wast thou humbled in every circumstance relating to thy conception and birth! O that we might study humility from thy low abasement!

SECONDLY, Our Redeemer was made under the law, though he be the Lord of all, and the Lawgiver unto his rational creatures. Rebellious man had shaken off the yoke of his obedience, and Christ therefore lays his neck under it. He submitted himself to the ceremonial law, undergoing the painful operation of circumcision on the eighth day after his birth, as was therein enjoined; to the civil law paying tribute, &c.; and to the moral law, obeying the precepts thereof, and suffering the penal sanction of it, which was added in case of transgression by man, in whose room he substituted himself.

1. He submitted to the preceptive part of the law as a covenant of works, which man had broken: and this he fulfilled, so that he

was even subject to Joseph his supposed father, and to Mary his Mother, according to the flesh, Luke ii. 51.; nay, to every branch of it, in fulfilling all righteousness, Matth. iii. 15. By this his obedience the law was magnified and made honourable, and got its full due in respect of active obedience, which it could never have got from men, though all their pieces of obedience had been accumulated into one sum.

2. He submitted to the threatening or penal sanction of the law. Though there was no guile found in his mouth, and he owed the law nothing, as being the great Lawgiver, yet the law took him by the throat, as the undertaker for sinners, saying, 'Pay me what thou owest.' The threatening was enacted, and he answered it to a tittle, bearing that death in his soul and body which it had threatened on account of sin. And thus he took on the debt of elect sinners, and he paid it to the utmost farthing. O wonderful condescension in the Lord and Lawgiver, to yield obedience to his own law, that was made for creatures, in all its demands, the most rigorous not excepted? O blessed Undertaker, who hast paid all the debt of bankrupt men!

THIRDLY, He underwent the miseries of this life, which was infected with the plague of sin, and thereby rendered very grievous to bear; and yet he, though sinless, humbled himself to bear the tokens thereof. As,

1. Poverty: 'Though the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, yet he, the Son of man, had not where to lay his head.' Adam had reduced all his posterity to beggary, and Christ submitted to the poverty following it; not having wherewith to maintain himself, but receiving supplies from some women who ministered to him of their substance. He was so poor that he had not wherewith to pay the tribute exacted of him till he wrought a miracle for it. In his greatest state, and when attended with the grandest cavalcade, he was mounted, not on a horse finely caparisoned, but on a silly ass, and that none of his own, but borrowed from another.

2. Sorrow: Isa. liii. 3. He was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' There was a constant cloud of sorrow on him. Once we read of his rejoicing in spirit, but never of his laughing; frequently of his complaints, tears, and groans. He was content to sorrow for us, that we might rejoice, and to weep that we might be glad.

3. The indignities of the world, in the contempt, reproach, and despite poured upon him. He was despised and rejected of men. Hence he says of himself in this respect, Psal. xxii. 6. 'I am a

worm and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the people.' He was contradicted of sinners, called Beelzebub, a madman, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, &c.

4. The temptations of Satan. He was tempted of the devil forty days in the wilderness and elsewhere: nay tempted to self-murder, and to the worship of that damned spirit, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Satan seems to have often set upon him, though the particular times are not mentioned in the sacred records; as appears from Luke iv. 13. where it is said, that 'the devil departed from him (after his grand temptation) for a season;' denoting that he would attack him again.

Lastly, The sinless infirmities of human nature. He was subjected to weariness, hunger, thirst, &c. as the history of his life in the evangelists abundantly declares. Thus low was the Son of God humbled on account of sinners, that they might not perish for ever. O let us admire his humiliation and abasement, and let his low estate for ever hide pride from our eyes, and teach us, in whatever state we are, therewith to be content.

FOURTHLY, He underwent the wrath of God. Thus he humbled himself to drink the bitter dregs of his Father's wrath for us. The curse of the law was laid upon him, and he bore it for us, Gal. iii. 13. His soul was troubled, John xii. 27. He was beset with sorrows of the deepest sort, when he said, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' Matth. xxvi. 38. He was in an agony, so as it made him sweat great drops of blood, that trickled from his blessed body in a cold night in the open air. Whence was all this but from the load of his Father's wrath that lay on him, on account of all the sins of his elect people imputed to him? a load, which, if laid on all the angels in heaven and men on earth, would have sunk them to the lowest hell. Compare the martyrs quietly bearing the most fearful deaths. They were supported by divine consolations flowing into their souls, without one drop of God's wrath in the cup given them to drink. But from him all divine comforts were withheld. See that desertion of God of which he so bitterly cried out on the cross, when there was an eclipse of comfort from his holy soul, as there was of the sun in his cheering beams from the earth, that he might bear that wrath in full measure. O what an amazing step of humiliation was this! Who knows the power of the Lord's wrath? If fatherly anger made David to roar, and vindictive justice devils to tremble under the fearful apprehensions of the wrath to come upon them, how dreadful behoved that wrath to be which was due to the sins of all the elect, when accumulated in one sum, and all charged upon Christ at once? He was set up as a mark

against which all the arrows of the divine wrath were levelled; the quiver thereof was emptied upon him. No wonder then that he was in agony, that blood trickled from every pore of his body, and that his holy human soul recoiled, as it were, from the terrible shock it underwent under this load of wrath and the curse of the law.

FIFTHLY, He underwent the cursed death of the cross. Being betrayed by Judas, forsaken by all his disciples, denied by the self-confident Peter, and condemned by Pilate, he was put to death on the cross. This death of Christ was,

1. Most painful. No death is without pain. But his death was most painful: for 'it pleased the Lord to bruise him.' Consider here,

(1.) Our Lord was scourged, having his blessed back beaten with sharp rods, Matt. xxvii. 26. which was a most shameful and painful thing.

(2.) He was crowned with thorns; and the mad soldiers struck him on the head, when this prickly crown was on his head, thereby driving the thorns into it, and making them penetrate the deeper, Matt. xxvii. 29, 30. whereby it seems he was so overspread with his own blood, that Pilate thought him already an object of commiseration, and brought him forth to the Jews, saying 'Behold the man,' John xix. 5. Add to this what he suffered from blows and cuffs laid on him without mercy, and their compelling him to bear his own cross, till, fainting with the heavy load and his inward sufferings, they obliged another to drag it to the place of execution.

(3.) He was crucified; which was a most painful and excruciating death. For consider,

[1.] The extending of his body on the cross, which lying on the ground, his body was with such force stretched out its full length, that his bones were drawn out of joint, as he himself pathetically expresses it in prophetical language, long before the tragical event took place, Psal. xxii. 14. 'My bones are out of joint,' His sinews were distended, and his bones dislocated by the violent distension.

[2.] The nailing of the body so extended unto the cross. These nails were driven through the hands and the feet, the sinewy and most sensible parts of the body; which could not but occasion greater pain to Christ's body, which was of a finer temperature and more acute feeling than the bodies of other men, as being entirely exempted from the corruption and distempers these are liable to. And great indeed it seems they were; for he says, 'they pierced my hands and feet;' in Hebrew they *digged* them, as it were with spades and mattocks, which could not but occasion the most excruciating and acute pain.

[3.] What dreadful pain behoved the lifting up of the cross, with him nailed to it, be to his blessed body, especially if done with a sudden jerk, which we may suppose to have been probably the case, considering the eagerness of his enemies to have him dispatched; and then thrusting it down again into the ground that it might stand upright, attended no doubt with shaking from side to side? Every one may well perceive what dreadful pain must have attended all this horrid scene.

[4.] It was a longsome or lingering death. He hung on the cross about six hours, from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon, Mark xv. 25, 34. What pain behoved to attend such a long suspension on the cross, his blessed body hanging all the while by his hands nailed to the upper part?

2. His death was most shameful and ignominious, Heb. xii. 2. 'He endured the cross, despising the shame.' Much shame was cast upon him. They spit upon him, and mocked him. The death of the cross was a death for bondmen, seldom for freemen, and those only of the baser sort, and for some of the highest crimes. While he was a-dying he stood naked on the cross; for they that were crucified were first stript naked of all their clothes, Matt. xxvii. 35. He was crucified in the midst of two thieves, as if he had been the chief of them, and that without the gate, as the blasphemer was without the camp. They wagged their heads at him. He was mocked in his prophetical office: they blindfolded him, and bad him 'prophesy who smote him.' He was mocked in his priestly office, 'He saved others, but himself he cannot save.' And he was mocked in his kingly office; they cried unto him, 'Hail, King of the Jews;' and this title, 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews,' was inscribed on his cross, as giving him out for a mock monarch.

3. It was a cursed death, Deut. xxi. 23. 'He that is hanged, is accursed of God.' That was but a ceremonial curse, but it was a real one to him, Gal. iii. 13. 'He was made a curse for us.' There were many other kinds of death among the Jews; but that kind only was accursed: and therefore it behoved Christ our Surety so to die. It is thought this crucifying of criminals was forbidden in the time of the Emperor Constantine.

SIXTHLY, He was buried, so that there might be full assurance given of his death, upon the reality of which the hopes and happiness of his people depend, inasmuch as thereby transgression was finished, an end put to sin, reconciliation made for iniquity, and everlasting righteousness brought in. He was buried too, that he might conquer death in its darkest and strongest hold, even in the gloomy recesses of the grave: to sanctify and sweeten it to all his

friends and followers, that it may be to them a place of repose, where their bodies may rest till the resurrection; that his people may have power and strength to bury sin, so as it may never rise up against them to their condemnation; and to teach his followers to give one another's dead bodies a just and decent interment.

The persons who concerned themselves in our Lord's funeral, were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, John xix. 38,—42. They were rich men, senators, and counsellors in the Jewish state, and of as bright and distinguished characters as any who sat in the sanhedrim; and yet they were so far from reckoning it a dishonour, that they counted it a piece of singular glory to be employed in this last act of kindness to their dead Lord. Now, when the apostles were all fled, and none of them appeared to shew this respect to their Master, Providence stirred up these two great and rich men to act a part upon this occasion which was truly great and honourable. And those persons were well affected to our Redeemer. Though the weakness of their faith moved them to conceal their profession during his life, yet now, when he is dead, and none of all his followers have the courage to own or concern themselves about him, they boldly appear in acting this part of sincere friends to him.

The place where our Lord was buried was a new sepulchre in a garden, wherein no man had ever been laid, John xix. 41. Thus our Lord was buried not in his own, but in another man's grave. As in the days of his life he was in such circumstances, that he himself said, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head;' so when he was dead he had no grave of his own to be laid in. When he was born, he was born in another man's house; when he preached, he preached in another man's ship; when he prayed, he prayed in another man's garden; when he rode to Jerusalem, he rode on another man's ass; and when he was buried, he was buried in another man's grave. He had nothing peculiar to himself but his cross; which no man would touch, far less take from him, even when he was ready to faint under the weight of it, till Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear it. The grave belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, who was a rich man; and thus there was a memorable fulfilment of that prophecy, Isa. liii. 9. 'He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.' Though upon the cross he was insulted and despised, yet he was honourably laid in the grave. It was a new grave; which a wise Providence so ordered, that the Jews might have no ground to surmise, either that some other buried before had risen, or that his resurrection was not the effect of his own power, but of virtue flowing from the body of some saint formerly interred

there, as in the case of that dead man, who being let down into the grave of Elisha, and touching his bones, revived, and stood up on his feet, 2 Kings xiii. 21. This grave was in a garden; which Joseph contrived to have so, that it might be a memorandum to him, while living amidst all the pleasures and products of this garden, to think of death, and to be diligent in preparing for it. In a sepulchre in a garden Christ's body was laid. In the garden of Eden death and the grave received their power, and now in a garden are conquered, disarmed, and triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion, and in a garden he would rise and begin his exaltation. Christ fell to the ground as a corn of wheat, John xii. 24. and therefore was sown in a garden among the seeds, for his dew is as the dew of herbs, Isa. xxvii. 19; yea, he is the fountain of gardens, Cant. iv. 15.

As to the manner of our Lord's funeral, several things may be observed.

1. Joseph, inspired with an undaunted courage, went to Pilate, and boldly asked the dead body of Jesus. Though while our Redeemer lived, Joseph was so far sunk under the power of fear and cowardice, that he acted only as his secret disciple, yet now when he is dead, holy boldness and conrage rose to such a pitch in his spirit, that he openly asked his body of Pilate, in order to a decent interment. Though he might have formed a party to have carried it off by violence, yet he rather chose to do it in a regular and peaceable manner; and therefore made a dutiful application to Pilate, who was the proper person to be addressed on this occasion, in regard he had the disposal of the body. In things wherein the power of the civil magistrate is concerned, due regard must be had to that power, and nothing done to break in upon it.

2. Upon this application, Pilate very readily granted Joseph the body of Jesus, in order to its being decently interred. Perhaps by this step he imagined to do something towards atoning that guilt wherewith his conscience charged him in condemning an innocent person. But whatever might be in this, it is certain, that, in Joseph's petition and Pilate's ready grant of it, honour was done to Christ, and a testimony borne to his integrity.

3. Joseph having obtained his desire, instantly repaired to the accursed tree, from which he took down the body of Jesus; and mangled and mascerated as it was, carried it in his arms to a place proper for its being dressed. Thus did he act under the prevailing conduct of the deepest and dearest love to his Redeemer.

4. Our Redeemer's body being brought into some adjoining house, it was washed from blood and dust, and then wound in linen with

spices, as the manner of the Jews was. But why did Joseph and Nicodemus make all this ado about the body of Christ? Though perhaps in this their management we may discern the weakness of their faith, for a firm belief of the resurrection of Christ the third day would have saved them this care and cost, and have been more acceptable than all spices; yet herein we may evidently see the strength of their love, together with the value they had for his person and doctrine, which was no way lessened by the reproach of the cross.

5. The time of our Lord's burial was on the day of the preparation, when the Sabbath drew on; and this was the reason that they made such haste with the funeral. Though they were in tears for the death of Christ, yet they did not forget the work of an approaching Sabbath; but set themselves with all convenient speed and care to prepare for it.

6. The company who attended our Redeemer's funeral, was not any of the disciples, but only the women who came with him from Galilee, who, as they staid by him while he hung upon the cross, so they followed him all in tears, beheld the sepulchre where it was, which was the way to it, and how his body was laid in it: and all this they were led to, not by their curiosity, but by their affection to the Lord Jesus, which was strong as death, cruel as the grave, and which many waters could not quench.

7. The Redeemer's funeral was actually solemnized; for after all the above circumstances were over, then they acted as is related, John xix. 41, 42. 'Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews preparation day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. 'There laid they Jesus,' i. e. the dead body of Jesus. Some think that the calling of that *Jesus* intimates the inseparable union between the divine and human natures in his blessed person. Even this dead body was Jesus a Saviour; for his death is our life. Thus, without pomp or solemnity, is the body of Jesus laid in the cold and silent grave. Here lies our Surety arrested for our debt: so that if he be released, his discharge will be ours. Here is the Sun of righteousness set for a while to rise again in greater glory, and set no more. Here lies a seeming captive to death, but a real conqueror over death. Yea here lies death itself slain, and the grave conquered: 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

SEVENTHLY, Our Redeemer continued under the power of death for a time. 'For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the

whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Matth. xii. 40. For clearing the import of Christ's continuing under the power of death for a time, consider,

1. That death hath a very strange and strong power in the world, which invades and prevails against all the children of men. 'For what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?' says the Psalmist. This interrogation plainly imports, that no man, high or low, great or small, rich or poor, can possibly cover himself from the stroke of death. And no wonder; for as the apostle tells us, 'death hath reigned from Adam,' Rom. v. 14. The empire of death hath made an universal spread through the face of the earth, and, with an unrelenting fury, bears all the sons of men before it. And it is no way strange it be so, seeing it acts under the conduct of Heaven's irrepealable decree, 'It is appointed unto men once to die,' Heb. ix. 27.

2. That the empire, power, and dominion of death, was introduced into the world by sin, Rom. v. 12. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The wages of sin is death.' And therefore man no sooner gave into apostacy from his Maker, but the awful sentence went forth, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,' Gen. iii. 19.

3. That our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of life, fell under the power of death, and that in its most frightful and amazing form: for he died the painful, the cursed, the shameful, and lingering death of the cross; and this he did not by constraint, but with the utmost cheerfulness.

4. That it was for the sins of his elect people that the Lord of life came under the power of death. Their sins were imputed to him: 'He was made sin for us,' says the apostle, 'who knew no sin.' Because their sins were imputed to him, therefore death, the punishment of sin, came upon him. He was not only wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, but he died for our sins. He bare the sins of many; and for the transgressions of his people was he stricken, yea, stricken even unto death.

5. That though our Redeemer continued under the power of death, yet it was only for a time. Though this king of terrors brought the King of glory down to the gloomy shades of the grave, yet he could not hold him long there. Hence the apostle says, Acts ii. 24. 'God loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.' Christ was imprisoned for our debt, and thrown into the hands of death; but divine justice being satisfied, it was not possible that he should be detained there, either by

right or by force; for he had life in himself, and in his own power, and had conquered the prince of death.

6. That the time of our Redeemer's being under the power of death was only till the third day. For he rose the third day after his death: which was the time he had often prefixed, and he kept within it. He was buried in the evening of the sixth day of the week, and rose in the morning of the first day of the following week; so that he lay in the grave about thirty-six or thirty-eight hours. He lay so long to shew that he was really and truly dead, and no longer, that he might not see corruption.

If it should be asked, What were the reasons and ends of this amazing humiliation of the Son of God? I answer, That *Christ humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

1. That he might satisfy divine justice in the room and stead of an elect world. When man by sin rebelled against his rightful Lord, incensed justice called aloud for vengeance upon the attrocious offender; and had its rigorous demands been answered, all the race of mankind had perished in the depths of death and damnation for ever. But Christ, by the whole scene of his humiliation, has so fully answered all its demands of his chosen, that it can crave no more. For he by his obedience and satisfaction, as the Surety of unjust sinners, has so perfectly paid all their debt, that justice is completely atoned and pacified. Hence our Redeemer drew his last breath on the cross with these words, 'It is finished.'

2. To confirm and seal his testament. He had bequeathed many great and glorious legacies to his chosen; all which had failed for ever, if by his death he had not ratified and confirmed this his testament, 'For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth,' Heb. ix. 16, 17. Wherefore, that our Lord's testament might in that respect be made good, he sealed it with his heart's blood: 'This cup,' says he, 'is the new testament in my blood,' i. e. the new testament, which is ratified by my blood.

3. To conquer and subdue the devil. This malicious and subtil enemy of mankind had by his craft and power brought the whole race of Adam in subjection to his empire, reigning over and leading them captive at his pleasure. But our Lord through death destroyed him that had the power of death. It is true, the crucifying of Jesus was the devil's plot; for he put Judas upon betraying him, the Jews upon accusing him, Pilate upon condemning him, and the soldiers upon executing him. But our Lord outshot him in his own

bow, and snared and took him in his own hands. Thus the devil, by plotting and pushing on the death of the Son of God, to prevent his own ruin, procured and promoted it.

4. To finish transgression, and put an end to sin, yea, to take away sin with all its direful effects, Rom. viii. 3. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.' For when an elect world lay sunk under the guilt of sin, captives under the power of it, vile under the pollution of it, undone under the weight of it, and most miserable under the baneful effects of it, Jesus humbled himself to the death on purpose to rescue and deliver them from all this. 'We have redemption through his blood,' says Paul, 'even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace.' And says another apostle, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'

5. To deliver his people from the curse of a broken law, and the wrath of God. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13. 'Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come,' 1 Thess. i. 10. When all the curses of the law were marching forth, as it were in battle-array, against the children of Adam, and the dreadful wrath of an Almighty God was ready to pour in upon them, then did our Lord step in, and, by his deeply debased birth, life, and death, divert the furious storm from his chosen, so that not one curse, or the least drop of wrath, shall ever fall to their share.

6. *Lastly*, That in due time he might bring all his people to the complete possession of immortal glory. When he saw them wallowing and sinking in the depths of sin and iniquity; when he saw them exposed to eternal death and damnation by reason of sin, and when he took a view of them as absolutely unable to do any thing towards their own relief and deliverance, his soul pitied them, and his bowels of compassion yearned upon them; so that in their stead he satisfied divine justice, subdued their enemies, abolished sin and death, rescued them from hell and wrath, and prepared for them eternal life and glory,

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. Here see the love of Christ in its most distinguishing glory. For the deeper he debased and the lower he humbled himself, the higher did he raise, and the more clearly did he manifest his love. What heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the greatness of this love! It is love without a precedent or parallel. It passeth knowledge.

2. Here see the awful and tremendous severity of divine justice,

which no less could satisfy than the Son of God's humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Its resentment against sin swelled so high, that nothing could appease it, or move it to let go the criminal offenders, till the Son of God fell an expiatory sacrifice to it. And when the time of its acting this bloody tragedy upon our Redeemer came on, it would not forego nor abate one tittle of its demands. It would not spare him in one article of suffering which it could exact of him.

3. See here the prodigious evil of sin. Though the generality of men look upon it with a very light and easy eye; though they account it a very small matter to break in upon the divine law, and to transgress the bounds which the great God has fixed therein; yet whoever duly reflects upon the deep humiliation and sorrowful sufferings of Christ, will entertain quite other thoughts about it. Of all evils sin is infinitely the worst. Though a holy and just God has given many severe and terrible testimonies of his displeasure against sin, yet none of them appear with such an amazing awe as that which appears in the humiliation, death, and sufferings of his dear Son.

4. Let this look the pride of our hearts out of countenance; and let us think nothing too mean or low for us, whereby the glory of God and the good of others may be advanced. For Christ humbled himself deeper and lower than any ever did or can do, to procure the favour of God to sinners, to magnify the divine law and make it honourable; and therein hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps.

5. Let this teach you highly to prize the salvation purchased by Christ, and offered to sinners in the gospel. Say not of the sufferings of Christ, by your slighting the redemption thereby procured, What needs all this waste? Surely sin must be of a more malignant nature, the justice of God more exact and rigorous, souls more precious, and salvation and mercy more difficult to obtain, than is ordinarily imagined. Take a view of Christ in his amazing humiliation and heavy sufferings, and see if ye can entertain those thoughts.

6. Let impenitent sinners and rejecters of Christ tremble. Was this done in the green tree, what shall be done to the dry? If Christ, when he became a sinner only by imputation was exposed to such heavy sufferings as would have sunk millions of men and angels, what shall be the fate of those who spurn at his love, reject the offers of his grace and mercy, and refuse to accept of his salvation? What can they expect, but that the wrath of God shall come upon them to the uttermost, and they shall undergo the sorest punishment that incensed and insulted justice can inflict?

7. Accept of Jesus Christ as he offers himself in the gospel. He is willing to receive sinners, nay, the very worst and most abandoned of them, or he had not swimmed through a sea of blood to catch them. O! be not despisers, but cheerful and willing receivers, of him who has written his love and good will to you in characters of blood.

8. Revenge the death of Christ on your lusts and idols. Give no quarter to, nor suffer them to live, that were the cause of his most humiliating and ignominious death. To cherish any sin or lust, is a high indignity done to the Son of God, and as it were a crucifying him afresh. O! then fly from every sin, account it your enemy, and Christ's enemy; and shew your love to the Redeemer, who humbled himself so deeply for you, by doing whatsoever he commands you, and avoiding all appearance of evil.

9. *Lastly*, Grudge not to part with any thing for Christ. He left the bosom of his Father, laid aside the robes of his glory, and exposed himself to the severest hardships and most intolerable sufferings, that you might not perish for ever! and will ye refuse any thing for his sake? Ye have no reason to shift his cross, or decline to take on his yoke, when he suffered on the accursed cross to procure your deliverance from everlasting wrath and burnings.

OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION.

PHIL. ii. 9, 10, 11.—*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

HAVING spoke to the several parts of our blessed Redeemer's state of humiliation, I come now to treat of the several branches of his exaltation, or that high dignity and glory to which he is exalted, as the reward of his suffering even unto death. This bright Sun set as it were in a cloud, but he rose again, surrounded with the brightest rays of the most exalted glory and splendour. This exaltation is held forth very expressly in the text, which, as it is opposed to his death, includes his resurrection, or releasement from the grave. God has not only exalted him, but super-exalted him above the earth in his ascension. The name above every name which is given him, is the same in effect with his sitting at the right

hand of God. The bowing of the knee is that acknowledgement of this power, dignity, and authority of Christ, by angels, men, and devils; the great evidence of which shall be at the last day, Rom. xiv. 10, 11. 'We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' For it is written, 'As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.'

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall consider the several steps of our Lord's exaltation, as they are laid down from the scriptures in our Catechism, viz. 'his rising from the dead on the third day, his ascending up into heaven, his sitting at the right-hand of God the Father, and his coming to judge the world at the last day.'

I. The first step of his exaltation was his resurrection, his rising out of the grave. Concerning this, consider the following things.

1. The nature of it. His resurrection was not the re-uniting of his divine to his human nature, for death had not separated that union, as I have formerly shewn; but his re-uniting his soul to his body, taking that life again which he had before laid down, John x. 17. And it was the very same body for substance which was crucified; it was the very same body that fell under death that rose again. It had been laid in the grave mangled and macerated with blows, stripes, and wounds; but in his resurrection the deformity thereby occasioned was removed, and nothing but the prints of the nails remained; as appears from John xx. 25, 27.

2. The truth of his resurrection. Christ truly rose again. This truth was attested by the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, as ye will find, Matth. xxviii. 11—15. though the elders took care to smother the effect thereof. His friends bore the most ample testimony to it; such as the women who came to anoint his dead body, his disciples and many others. To these, 'he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs,' Acts i. 3. And we are told, 1 Cor. xv. 6. that 'he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.' The evangelists are unanimous in this matter. This truth is also manifest from the person's being God, who could not be confined in a grave, and the many miracles wrought to confirm it, evincing him to be alive, and reigning in glory.

3. The necessity of his resurrection. It was necessary he should rise from the dead.

(1.) That the scripture might be fulfilled, 1 Cor. xv. 4. which cannot be broken. See Psal. xvi. 10. 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (the state of the dead); neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption.' This passage is expressly applied to the resurrection of Christ, Acts ii. 31. and xiii. 35. And it was prophesied

of him: Isa. liii. 10. 'He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' A notable type of it was Jonah's coming out of the whale's belly, Matth. xii. 40.

(2.) In respect of the dignity and glory of his person. He was the true God and eternal life. How was it then possible, that he should be holden by death? Acts ii. 24.

(3.) In respect of his Mediatory office, which would have been broken if he had not risen again. He was to reign for ever, Psal. xlv. 7. Luke i. 32; to intercede as a Priest for ever, Psal. cx. 4. and therefore to enter into the holiest of all, after he had expiated our sins by his blood.

(4.) In respect of our salvation. If Christ had not risen, all the elect's hopes of heaven had rotted in the grave for ever: 1 Cor. xv. 17. 'If Christ be not raised, (says the apostle), your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.' His resurrection was the life of his death, and had he not by his resurrection overcome death; it would for ever have devoured us also.

4. The time of his resurrection, the third day. He was crucified on Friday afternoon, and he arose early on the first day of the week, which has from that event been called the Lord's day, and observed as the Christian Sabbath in all the churches of Christ. This period was long enough to confirm the truth of his death. His body did not corrupt in the grave, Psal. xvi. 10. Acts xiii. 37. Nor was it ever after mortal, but put on immortality, Rom. vi. 9. 'Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.' This was one difference betwixt Christ's resurrection and that of Lazarus, who rose again only to a mortal life.

5. The author of his resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is ascribed to himself, and we are firmly to believe that he rose by his own power, John ii. 19. 'Destroy this temple, (says he), and in three days I will raise it up.' John x. 17. 'I lay down my life, that I might take it again.' And this the scripture insists upon as an argument of the divinity of Christ, Rom. i. 4. where he is said to be 'declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:' which must needs be thus understood; for Lazarus also was raised; yet no such thing followed on it. It is ascribed also unto the Father, Rom. vi. 4. But there is no inconsistency here: for whatsoever the Father doth, the Son also doth the same, the external works of the Trinity being common to each person. The reason why Christ's resurrection is ascribed to the Father, is, that he acted therein as a judge, letting out the prisoner when the debt was paid.

6. The manner of our Lord's resurrection.

(1.) It was ushered in with a terrible earthquake, Matth. xxviii. 2. 'Behold, there was a great earthquake.' As the earth shook and trembled at our Lord's passion, so did it also at his glorious resurrection from the dead. This was an extraordinary and miraculous shaking of the earth, proceeding immediately from the divine power, as the eclipse of the sun which happened during his passion. It was a sign of triumph, and a token of victory, by which our Lord intimated to the whole world, that he had overcome death in its own dominions, and lifted up his head as a glorious conqueror above all his enemies. He came out of the grave with great solemnity, and marched out of the bloody field with a pomp and majesty becoming the dignity of Heaven's champion.

(2.) Christ in his resurrection was attended by some of the courtiers of heaven, Matt. xxviii. 2. 'An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.' Christ's power was not confined to the grave or the earth, but extended to heaven and all the host of it. Though the chief priests and Pharisees conspired together to keep him close shut up in the grave, sealed the stone which was rolled to the door of it, set a watch, and made all things as sure as they possibly could, yet one of the heavenly host by a touch baffled all their measures. The angel of the Lord rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. This action speaks a secure triumph over all the obstructions of Christ's resurrection. He sat on the stone, defying all the powers of hell to roll the stone to the grave again: and he sat as a guard to the grave; for having frightened away the enemy's black guard, he sat expecting the women to give them an account of our Lord's resurrection, as he very pathetically did, ver. 6. 'He is not here: for he is risen, as he said: come, see the place where the Lord lay.'

(3.) He laid aside all the ensigns of mortality and death: for he stript himself of the grave-clothes, and left them behind him, John xx. 5, 6, 7. The reasons of this laying them aside might be these. [1.] Because he rose to die no more. Lazarus came out with his grave-clothes on, because he was to die again; but Christ rising to an immortal life, came out free from all these incumbrances. [2.] Because he was going to be clothed with robes of glory. [3.] He left these clothes in the grave, as it were for the use of his people. For if the grave be a bed to the saints, he hath thus sheeted it, and made it ready for them, that in it they may lie quietly and easily till the morning of the resurrection, when they shall enter into the full and eternal possession of the glory that is to be revealed.

These grave-clothes were found in very good order; which shews that his body was not stolen away when the watch slept, as the chief priests and elders foolishly bade them say. Robbers of tombs have been known to take away the clothes and leave the body; but none ever took away the body, and left the clothes, especially when they were made of fine linen and new.

(4.) Christ's resurrection was attended with that of many others, Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. 'The graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.' Here observe, (1.) Who they were that rose. They are expressly called *saints*, persons sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God: for such only shall rise by the virtue and power of Christ's resurrection. Who they were, whether the ancient patriarchs, the Old Testament martyrs, or more modern saints, who lived in Christ's time, but died before him, cannot be determined. (2.) That their number was considerable; they are called *many*. The benefits of our Lord's resurrection extends to many. (3.) The time of their rising was posterior to Christ's resurrection. For though before this the earth did quake, the rocks rend, and the graves were opened, yet none of them stirred out of these dark mansions till Christ was risen. It is in virtue of Christ's resurrection, that the bodies of all the saints shall in the fulness of time rise again. (4.) They went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. They did not appear to all the people, but to many; but whether friends or enemies, in what manner they appeared, how often, what they did and said, and how they disappeared, are secret things not to be known. It is very probable, however, that the great design of their appearing to so many was to bear testimony to the truth and certainty, to the power and glory of our Redeemer's resurrection. [5.] What became of these saints afterwards, is a question not easy to be determined. Some are of opinion, that as they rose only to bear witness of Christ's resurrection to those to whom they appeared, so having finished this their work, they retired to their graves again. But it seems to be more agreeable both to the Redeemer's honour and theirs, to suppose, that they rose, as he did, to die no more, and therefore ascended with him into glory.

7. The fruits of Christ's resurrection. Amongst many, I only name the following.

(1.) It is an argument of his having made complete satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of his people, John xvi. 10. When the just Judge opens the prison door, it says that the prisoner's debt is fully paid, and he has received satisfaction for all

demands from him. Christ's resurrection was in effect a discharge of all the debt he had taken upon him to pay.

(2.) It is an argument, that the bodies of the elect shall be raised at the last day, 1 Cor. xv. 20. 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.' If Christ has risen, the power of death is broken. And the same Spirit dwells in his members, Rom. viii. 11. And all the benefits of the covenant shall be made forthcoming, seeing he is alive to become executor of his own testament.

(3.) The duty of believers flowing from this is to walk in newness of life, Rom. vi. 4. They are to rise from the grave of sin, and to put on the robes of true holiness. Dead sinners are not fit members of a living head.

II. Christ ascended into heaven, the seat of the blessed. Concerning this, let us observe,

1. In what respect he ascended. Not in respect of his divine nature, for that can change no place, and is confined to no place; but in respect of his human nature, which is so present in one place, that it cannot be in another at the same time, and it changeth one place for another by local motion. It was his human body that ascended into heaven, and which the heavens must contain till the restitution of all things.

2. The reality of his ascension. He did not merely disappear, but by a local motion went up from the earth into the highest heavens, leaving the one, and going to the other. And he ascended in a visible manner, before the eyes of his disciples.

3. The time of it, which was forty days after his resurrection, Acts i. 2, 3. This his long stay on the earth was the blessed effect of his matchless and unparalleled love to his church and people. Though ineffable glory was prepared and waiting for him in heaven, yet he would not go to possess it till he had ordered all things aright that concerned the good of his followers here on earth. More particularly, he staid so long on earth,

(1.) That he might the more convincingly testify unto his disciples the truth of his humanity, and confirm them in the faith of his being truly man.

(2.) To confirm them still the more strongly in the faith of his resurrection from the dead. This was a truth which the disciples were not easily induced to believe. Hence when they first heard it from Mary Magdalene, and the other women that had been at the sepulchre, it is said, that 'their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not,' Luke xxiv. 11. But his staying so long on the earth, and frequently conversing with them, gave them

full assurance of the reality of his resurrection. He showed himself alive to them by many infallible proofs. He walked and talked with them, ate and drank with them. He again and again shewed them the marks of the wounds in his hands, and feet, and side; which was the utmost proof the thing was capable of or required. Besides, it was not one or two, but many proofs which he gave them of this; for he was seen by them forty days; not indeed constantly residing with them, but frequently appearing to them, and bringing them by degrees to be fully satisfied of the truth of his resurrection.

(3.) To instruct them more clearly and perfectly in the knowledge of the mysteries of his kingdom, which after his departure they were to preach and propagate through the world. He had given them a general idea of that kingdom, and of the time when it should be set up, in the parable of the vineyard, Mark xii.; but upon this occasion he let them more clearly into the nature of it, as a kingdom of grace in this world, and of glory in that which is to come; and no doubt opened to them that covenant which is the great charter by which it is incorporated. Thus our Lord did not entertain his disciples with discourses about politics in the kingdoms of men, about philosophy in the kingdom of nature, but about pure divinity and his spiritual kingdom, which were matters of greatest concern, both to themselves and to those to whom they were in a little time to preach.

4. The manner of our Lord's ascension.

(1.) He ascended not figuratively and metaphorically, but really and corporeally, by a local translation of his human nature from the earth to the highest heavens. He ascended from a mount, an high and eminent place, to ascertain his disciples of the truth of his ascension. He did not withdraw himself from them as at other times, but ascended openly in the view of them all, they looking stedfastly toward heaven as he went up. He ascended from the Mount of Olives, that he might enter on his glory nigh the place of his sufferings, and the last tragical scene of his life. It was at this mount that his heart was made sad; for there he began to be sorrowful and sore amazed: and it was there also that his heart was made glad, and filled with ineffable and triumphant joy. The same place afforded him a passage both to his cross and to his crown; for there his sorrows and sufferings began, and from thence he ascended into heaven.

(2.) He ascended while he was blessing his disciples. He blessed them as one having authority; yea, commanded the blessing upon them. And while he was so employed, he was parted from them, to intimate that his being so did not put an end to his blessing

them, but that this privilege was to be continued with them by virtue of his powerful intercession for them in heaven. The first tidings of our Redeemer's birth were attended with praises to God and blessings to men: he began his public ministry with pronouncing blessings on certain characters, Matth. v.; when he died, he breathed out his soul in blessings to his enemies, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;' and just when he was leaving the world, he was translated with a blessing in his mouth.

(3.) He ascended powerfully, even by his own almighty power. As by the power of his eternal Godhead he broke through the gloomy shades of the grave, and rose again to an immortal life; so by the same almighty strength he went gloriously up through the yielding air into the bright regions of eternal light. Enoch and Elijah were both translated soul and body into heaven; but this was not by their own, but by a divine power which exerted itself upon that occasion, by the ministry of angels. But our Redeemer went up upon the wings of his own almighty power.

(4.) He ascended softly and gradually. Though his conduct in this matter could not but strike with a strong surprise upon the minds of his disciples, yet his motion was so plain, easy, and distinct, that it fell very clearly under their observation; for while they beheld he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.' Thus he departed by little and little, and not in a rapturous haste.

(5.) He ascended in a glorious and triumphant manner.

[1.] There was a cloud prepared as his royal chariot to carry him up to his princely palace. A cloud, in the natural notion of it, is a thick and moist vapour, drawn up from the earth or sea, by the heat of the sun, to the middle region of the air, where it is condensed, congealed, and thickened, by the coldness of the place, and so hangs or moves like a huge mountain in the midst of the air, partly from natural causes, the sun or the wind, but especially by supernatural ones, the mighty power and appointment of God, who is said to use the clouds as princes do horses of state or chariots of triumph to ride on. Thus he descended in a cloud to Moses, and proclaimed the name of the Lord, Exod. xxxiv. 5: and it is said, Isa. xix. 1. 'Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud.' We find the clouds were serviceable to our Redeemer: for a bright cloud overshadowed him at his transfiguration; he was carried up in a cloud to heaven at his ascension; and at the last day the clouds will be the chariots which will bring him to judgment. Hereby Christ discovered himself to be the Lord of all the creatures. He had already trode upon the earth, walked upon the sea, van-

quished hell and the grave; and now he makes the clouds his chariots, and rides upon the wings of the wind.

(2.) In his ascension he was attended with a bright and blessed retinue of glorious angels. These angelic spirits graced the solemnity of his birth with anthems of triumphant joy; they ministered to him at the conclusion of his forty days' temptation by the devil; when he was exposed to his amazing agony in the garden the evening before his crucifixion, they waited on him; and now, when he is making his triumphant entrance into glory, their presence adds to the glorious solemnity of the happy day. To this we may add, that it is not an improbable supposition, that on this grand occasion he was attended with the company of those many saints that rose from the dead after his resurrection; whom he carried along with him, not only to grace the solemnity of his ascension, but as the first-fruits of his triumph over death and the grave, and a demonstrative evidence that the rest should follow in due time.

(3.) He went to heaven as a glorious conqueror, triumphing over all his enemies. 'When he ascended upon high,' says the apostle, 'he led captivity captive,' Eph. iv. 8. As conquerors of old in their solemn triumphs used to lead their captives fettered with iron chains: so Christ having spoiled principalities and powers, made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them, Col. ii. 15. Some think that at Christ's ascension there was some real visible triumph, some open pomp and shew, in which the devils were led as chained captives through the air: which was visible, not to all, but to God, the angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. But whatever be in this, it is certain that Christ fought and overcame all his enemies: he gave them the last blow upon the cross, he seized on the spoil at his resurrection, and led them in triumph at his ascension into heaven, and by his peaceable possession of his throne his subjects enjoy the benefit of all.

(4.) He ascended into heaven with shouts and acclamations of great joy, Psal. xlvii. 5. 'God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.' Hence, (1.) His ascension was celebrated with the acclamations of angels. If they sang so cheerfully when they came to proclaim his birth, O what shouts and jubilations were heard among them when they accompanied him in his triumphant entrance into heaven! The whole city of God was moved at his coming; the very heavens resounded, and echoed their acclamations of joy. Hence is that passage, Psal. xxiv. 7. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.' The entry of a mighty and victorious prince is there described; and so it is proper unto Christ:

they applaud him there as a mighty conqueror, newly returned from the spoils of his enemies. (2.) The blessed saints make the like applauses, as the prophet describes it, Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.' There is here a dialogue between Christ and the saints, to express their acclamations at his victory. They are represented as filled with admiration at his glorious triumphs over all his enemies: and they celebrate his victorious return from so bloody a battle, like a great and valiant general, gloriously adorned with rich robes and royal apparel, and besprinkled with the blood of his implacable enemies. (3.) God testifies his approbation of what Christ had done, by giving him a kindly welcome home to heaven, Psal. cx. 1. 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool:' As if he had said, 'Thy work is well done, Son, thou art welcome home to glory; sit now at my right hand,' &c. And on this account it is said, Dan. vii. 13. 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.' This vision of Christ was accomplished in his ascension. The holy angels bring him to the Father, called here, 'the Ancient of Days,' who gloriously rewards him for his toil and travel on earth, and his bloody sufferings in accomplishing the work of man's redemption, and receives him as it were with open arms, rejoicing exceedingly to see him again in heaven; and therefore he is said to be 'received up into glory,' 1 Tim. iii. 16.

(5.) He ascended into heaven in a most munificent manner, bestowing many royal gifts and blessings upon his people. Hence says the apostle, Eph. iv. 8. 'When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' The apostle here refers to Psal. lxviii. 13. 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.' There is here an allusion to the ancient customs of princes or generals, who, after some glorious achievements, or victories, used to mount their triumphant chariot, and enter into their royal cities attended

by their captive enemies, and afterwards to distribute gifts to their subjects and soldiers. Thus Christ, at his glorious ascension, when he entered heaven with solemn triumph, bestowed many rich and inestimable gifts upon men, to fit and qualify them for the work of the ministry, and to edify his mystical body. Some of these gifts were extraordinary, as the gifts of tongues and miracles, which were necessary and very useful in the first ages of Christianity. Others, again, were ordinary, and are to continue to the end of the world. And these are of various kinds. To some he gives depths of learning and a profound judgment; to others a gaining elocution; to some a mighty pathos, and melting influence upon the affections, and to others a forcible power of arguing. But they are all designed to gain souls to Christ, and promote the interests of his kingdom.

5. Why, or for what ends Christ ascended into heaven.

1. That he might be solemnly inaugurated and installed in glory. This was due unto him by Mediatory compact. He was to drink of the brook in the way, and therefore should he lift his head. This was the order that God appointed for his exaltation. The combat was to precede his triumph. He was first to suffer, and then to enter into glory. Hence we read, 1 Pet. i. 11. that 'the Spirit did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' His triumphant laurel grew upon the thorns of his cross, and received a verdure from his dying tears. The palms spread in his way at his entrance into Jerusalem a little before his death, are regarded by some as an emblem of this, it being the nature of that plant to grow and increase the higher by the weights that are hung upon it. For so did our blessed Lord rise to a more glorious and triumphant height by his heavy pressures.

(2.) To make way for the Spirit. For if Christ had not gone away, the Comforter had not come. This plentiful effusion of the Spirit was very necessary to fit and qualify the apostles for propagating the gospel through the world. Such weak and illiterate men as they generally were, could not have managed so great a work without a mighty magazine of divine eloquence and vigorous courage. It was therefore needful that our great High Priest should enter into the holy place, and appear before God with the blood of his sacrifice; that the treasures of the Spirit might be opened, and that the divine flame might issue out thence to inspire them with abilities for so great an undertaking.

(3.) To plead and make intercession for his people. After he had shed his precious blood on the earth for the expiation of their sin, he rose again from the dead, and went up into heaven as their

Advocate and Intercessor, that, by virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, he might answer all the charges brought against them, and sue out all the good things promised to them.

(4.) To prepare mansions of glory for all his followers, John xiv. 2. These were indeed prepared for them from all eternity, in the immutable purpose and decree of God, and from the foundation of the world by his creative power. But they were further prepared by Christ's ascension. And this lies in the following particulars. [1.] By this he set open the gates of heaven, that poor sinners might enter in. He removed all the bars and obstructions that were in the way, and made a patent passage for them into glory. [2.] He hath as a public person taken possession of the celestial kingdom in their name. On this account he is called 'the forerunner,' Heb. vi. 20. [3.] He prepares it for his people, in his sanctifying and purifying it for them. This was typified of old by the sprinkling the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, with the blood of the sacrifices. Hence it is said, Heb. ix. 23, 24. 'It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' We are not to think that heaven was polluted, and so under any necessity of being made clean: but the cry of man's sin had ascended up on high, as it were with a stinking savour; and therefore Christ behoved to go up and perfume it with his precious merit. [4.] He prepares it for his people, in providing and fitting all things for their entertainment against they come; as Joseph was sent into Egypt to prepare for his father Jacob.

Lastly, The duty that this lays on all that pretend interest in Christ. (1.) Let our hearts be there where our Lord is. Hence is that exhortation, Col. iii. 1, 2. 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.' Let us not be pursuing earthly things as our treasure, but live in this world as those whose heads are homeward, to the house prepared by their ascended Lord. (2.) Let us thence be encouraged to encounter with magnanimity and courage all difficulties that we may meet with in our Christian course and warfare; knowing that we shall be conquerors at last through him that loved us. Christ fought his way to the glory promised him through legions of armed hosts; and so must we, if we would be conformed to him as our Head: he has reached to the crown as the reward of his obedience

and sufferings; and so shall we if we follow on in his strength: 'Let us,' therefore, 'lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,' Heb. xii. 1.

III. The third step of our Lord's exaltation, is his sitting at the right hand of God.

This phrase, 'the right hand of God,' Heb. i. 3. Mark xvi. 19. Eph. i. 20. 1 Pet. iii. 22. is not to be taken properly but in a figurative sense. For God being a pure Spirit, is void of all bodily parts. When it is said, that Christ sits at God's right-hand, it is a borrowed expression, wherein the Lord is pleased to condescend to the weakness of our capacities, to the end we may form suitable thoughts of that glorious and exalted state into which Christ is advanced in the heavens. The phrase is wholly metaphorical, taken from the custom of kings and princes, who use to place those at their right hands, and next to themselves, upon whom they would confer the chief marks of favour and honour. More particularly, the right hand denotes,

1. Majesty and honour. It is the place we confer upon those we highly esteem. Thus, Solomon placed his mother at his right-hand, when he was set on his royal throne, 2 Kings ii. 19. And it is said of the church, the spouse of Christ, to denote the honour that he puts upon her, that 'she is at his right-hand,' Psal. xlv. 9. 'Upon thy right-hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.' So God, in testimony of the great honour and esteem that he puts upon Christ as Mediator, hath set him at his right-hand, which on this account is called 'the right-hand of the Majesty on high,' Heb. i. 3.

2. His power. Hence saith the Psalmist, Psal. lxxvii. 10. 'I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Most High.' There we find God's power under the metonymy of *a right hand*, opposed to the infirmity of his servant. 'My infirm and weak faith (saith Asaph) made me apt to sink under the weight of Heaven's displeasure; but when I called to mind my sweet experiences of the divine power which had been exerted for my deliverance in former distresses, this revived my spirit, and refreshed me again.

Christ's 'sitting at the right-hand of God,' implies the following things.

1. A state of rest, Micah iv. 4. 'They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree.' Christ had a troublesome life while in the world; but now that he has finished the work the Father gave him to do, 'he has for ever sat down at the right hand of God,' Heb. x. 12. and is thereby set beyond the reach of men and devils.

While here, they would give him no rest from his cradle to his grave; but now they may tear his picture, and persecute his members, but they cannot reach his person.

2. Continuance in that state, 2 Kings vii. 3. 'Why sit we here until we die?' said the four leprous men at the gate of Samaria. The days of sorrow that he met with on earth shall never recur; his crown shall flourish on his head, and his kingdom stand firm and be established.

His 'sitting at God's right hand' denotes,

1. The accomplishment of that work, and the consummation of all those offices, which he was to perform on the earth for the redemption of elect sinners. For till all this was finished, he was not to return to his glory. 'For he that hath entered into his rest, hath ceased from his works, as God did from his,' Heb. iv. 10.

2. The great delight and satisfaction that the Father had in Christ, and in that glorious work which he had finished. When he returned from earth to heaven, the Father welcomed him with the greatest testimony of satisfaction and joy, 'Sit thou on my right hand,' &c. Psal. cx. 1.

3. The great honour and dignity to which he is advanced in heaven. While he was here on earth he vailed his divinity with the infirmities of the flesh, and lived in a mean and low condition: but now he is exalted to the highest honour. In this respect he hath bestowed more honour on his own Son as Mediator, than ever he did on any creature: for, as it is said, Heb. i. 13. 'To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?'

4. His being invested with sovereign dominion and supreme authority and power. 'God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name,' Phil. ii. 9, 10. 'He hath set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, &c. 'Thou madest him a little lower than the angels,' i. e. in respect of his state of humiliation on the earth; 'thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of thy hands, and hast put all things in subjection under his feet, Heb. ii. 7, 8.

It is Christ as Mediator that sits at the Father's right hand. With respect to his divine nature, which in the days of his flesh was as a bottle in the smoke, apparently sullied and vailed, it now breaks forth in all its essential glory and splendour. And with regard to his human nature, which while tabernacling here bore the likeness of sinful flesh, and had nothing more engaging in it than that of other men to outward aspect, it has attained a glory far

superior to all creatures, even the very angels being made subject to the man Christ.

The ends for which our Redeemer sitteth at the right hand of God are these following.

1. That, as a mighty King, he may protect and defend his church and people, against the rage of all their enemies, both temporal and spiritual, Isa. xxxii. 1, 2; Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27.

2. That he may subdue all the enemies of his kingdom and people, the devil, with all his retinue, the world, the flesh, sin, and hell, Psal. cx. 1. Acts ii. 36. Heb. x. 12, 13. 1 Cor. xv. 25.

3. That with royal munificence he may dispense unto all his faithful subjects all those gifts and graces that may qualify them for the fruition of that glory that is to be revealed, Acts v. 31.

3. That he may act the part of a powerful Intercessor for them, Rom. viii. 34.

5. That all his friends and followers may with him be translated into heaven, and advanced unto a glorious state, being made kings and priests unto God, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. Rev. iii. 21.

Use. Behold here the great difference between our Redeemer's state while here on earth, and what it is now in heaven. How wonderfully is the scene changed! When he was on earth, he lodged in a stable, but now he reigns in a royal palace. Then he had a manger for his cradle, but now he sits in a chair of state. While here he was hated and scorned by men, but now he is adored by angels. Here his name was reproached and reviled, but there he hath a name above every name. Here he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; but now he is anointed with the oil of gladness, and filled with inexpressible delight and joy. While here he seemed to have no form or comeliness why he should be desired; but now he is manifestly the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Here he lay grovelling upon the ground, sweating drops of clotted blood; but there he sits upon a royal throne, surrounded with many myriads of holy angels. Here he groaned, but there he triumphs; here he was crucified, but there he is crowned.

2. Behold how highly our nature is dignified and ennobled, in the person of our Redeemer. It is far exalted above that of the angels; and these glorious spirits bow the knee to him who is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

3. This lets us see that the redemption of lost sinners, that was brought about by the death of Christ was very pleasing unto the Father. The great dignity and honour that is now conferred upon him, speaks a fragrancy in his satisfaction to God, as well as a fulness of merit for the sons of men.

4. Then we should draw near to him in all the duties of worship, with the most awful reverence and deepest prostration of soul, such as becomes the glory and dignity of his adorable Majesty. Let us have grace whereby we may serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

5. Then let this exalted Saviour have your hands and your heart. Will ye deny him a lodging in your souls, to whom the Father has given to sit on his right hand? The rejecting of Christ in his humble estate, was grievously punished on many individuals, and occasioned the destruction of the Jewish church and nation. And shall ye escape, if ye reject him now in his exalted and enthroned state? It is better that our hearts be his throne, where he may sway his sceptre in a way of mercy and grace, than that we be made his footstool in wrath.

6. Let this settle and compose the hearts of the Lord's people, with respect to the state of religion, and the interests of Christ's kingdom among men. Christ is seated on his throne, and will see to his interest in the world. Zion's God and King reigneth, Isa. lii. 7. If Christ be on his throne, all his enemies shall be destroyed. As sure as he reigns King for ever, so sure shall Antichrist be degraded and hurled from his throne, and all the rags he has left behind him in the Protestant churches be burnt up.

IV. The last step of our Lord's exaltation, is his coming to judge the world at the last day. As I discoursed to you of this formerly*, I shall be the briefer now. I shall endeavour a little to consider,

1. The manner and circumstances of Christ's coming to judge the world.

2. The Judge.

3. The parties to be judged.

4. The matters about which they are to be judged.

5. The properties of it.

6. The final causes of the judgment.

First, I am to consider the manner and circumstances of Christ's coming to judge the world.

1. He shall come with observation, in the view of the whole assembled world: for all the kindreds of the earth shall on that day see this mighty Personage with their bodily eyes. None of all the sons and daughters of Adam can possibly avoid this wonderful sight. 'Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him,

* This probably is the discourse on *The General Judgment* inserted in the *Fourfold State*, as no other Sermon on that subject is to be found among the author's MSS.

and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him,' Rev. i. 7.

2. Though he shall come with observation, or in a visible manner, yet he will do so very suddenly and surprisingly. As the universal deluge found the old world sleeping in the deepest security, so at the second coming of Christ the sinners of the last times will be drenched in slumbering stupidity, as is plain from Matth. xxiv. 37, 38, 39. In short, the coming of a thief to break a house, is not more surprising to those in it, than Christ's coming to judgment will be to sinners. Hence the apostle says, 1 Thess. v. 2. 'Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.'

3. He will come very seasonably, at the very precise point and period of time fixed upon in the eternal councils of heaven. When once that memorable moment begins, he will delay no longer, but instantly rend the heavens, and come down, 2 Pet. iii. 9, 10.

4. He will come very terribly. In that day the radiant rays of his majestic glory will break out with such an awful brightness, as will cause convulsions of the most formidable horror in the breasts of the ungodly. See Rev. vi. 14—17.

5. He will come gloriously: for 'then shall they see the Son of man coming with great power and glory,' Mark xiii. 26. To evince this, consider,

(1.) That this coming will be ushered in with that which our Lord himself calls 'the sign of the Son of man,' Matth. xxiv. 30. What this sign of the Son of man is, interpreters are not agreed. Some take it to be Christ himself, others the burning up of the world, others the sound of the last trumpet, and the Papists the cross. But I think none of these can be the sign of the Lord Christ coming to judgment. I rather incline to follow the opinion of a judicious divine, who gathers what the sign of the Son of man is from Matth. xxiv. 27. 'For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be;' that is, with infinite brightness and splendour will he come at that day. When he appears the second time without sin unto salvation, such rays of radiant brightness will set upon and shine from his body, as will darken all other lights, and awaken the drowsy world to look for his coming. Now, that such a brightness will encompass and shine from our Redeemer's body, we have no reason to doubt, seeing at his transfiguration upon the Mount 'his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was as white as the light,' Matth. xvii. 2. Now, all this beauty and brightness that appeared on our Redeemer's body at his transfiguration, was but a type and figure of that refulgent splendour which will shine from it in that

day when he will come to judge the world in righteousness. And this matchless and marvellous brightness we may presume to be that which he himself calls 'the sign of the Son of Man.'

(2.) When our Lord comes, the whole frame of nature will suffer the most fearful convulsions, and at last be rolled up in an universal flame, Psal. l. 3. Dan. vii. 9, 10. When once this mighty flame breaks out, it will burn with the keenest fury, and lay the earth, with all its works, in heaps of ruinous rubbish, 2. Pet. iii. 10.

3. At his coming he will be attended with a splendid retinue of ten thousand times ten thousand glorious angels. The flaming seraphims, those mighty ministers of his who fulfil all his pleasure, shall in a magnificent body form a majestic cavalcade, when the Prince of the kings of the earth comes to judgment, Matth. xvi. 27. 2 Thess. i. 7. Dan vii. 10.

4. When he comes, he will sit upon a throne high and lifted up; and before him shall the general assembly of men and devils, be solemnly sisted, Matth. xxv. 31, 32. Rev. xx. 11, 12.

SECONDLY, I come now to speak of the Judge. And this is the Lord Jesus Christ. 'For, (says the apostle) we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,' 2 Cor. v. 10. Now, he is ordained Judge of the world.

1. Because this Judgment is to be acted visibly. Men are to be judged, and the whole process with them will be for things done in the body. Now God is invisible in his nature, and therefore hath most wisely ordained the last judgment of the world to be transacted by a visible person. The Son of God will appear in his human nature, seated on a visible throne, that he may be seen and heard of all.

2. Because Christ is only qualified for this office. (1.) On account of the great dignity and excellency of his person, being God-man. No mere creature is capable of so high a trust, and such a glorious commission. To pass a sovereign sentence upon angels and men, is a royalty reserved for the Son of God alone, (2.) On account of the immense difficulty of this work. No mere creature is able to discharge it. If a select number of the holy angels of the highest order were deputed for this purpose, they could not manage the judicial trial of one man. For, besides the innumerable acts and omissions in one life, the secret springs of the heart, from whence the guilt or goodness of moral actions is derived, are not open to them. It is he alone who discerns all things that can require an account of all.

3. He is constituted Judge of the world, as a reward of his death and bloody sufferings. So the apostle declares, Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10.

His victorious sufferings are the titles to his triumphs. His being so ignominiously condemned by men, is the just reason of his advancement to this dignity and glory. This will for ever roll away the ignominy of his cross.

THIRDLY, Who are they that shall be judged? All must appear before Christ's tribunal. Men of all conditions in the church, apostles and private Christians, ministers and people, old and young, the good and the bad, believers and unbelievers, the just and the unjust, Jews and Gentiles, bond and free. Men of all conditions in the world must stand before Christ's bar, high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, princes and peasants. No rank, degree, or quality, can exempt men from this appearance. All the distinctions which are among men here cease at the grave's mouth. All stand there on the same level, and are of the same mould. In a word, all the apostate angels and the universal progeny of Adam, shall appear before Christ at that day.

FOURTHLY, What are the things about which men shall be judged? We learn from 2 Cor. v. 10. that 'they are the things done in the body.' And they are these three, works, words, and thoughts.

1. All men's works will come unto judgment, whether they be good or bad, Eccl. xii. 14. 'God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' All their good works will then be tried, as acts of piety towards God, and acts of righteousness and charity towards men, with respect to their principle, motives, and end. All men's evil works will be tried in judgment, both open and secret. Many dig deep now to hide their counsels from the Lord, and carry their wickedness under a vail of darkness, and care not what they do, provided they do it undiscerned. There are many abominations committed in men's lives, which the eyes of the world cannot penetrate into; and there are innumerable evils lurking in their hearts, which no tongue can disclose. But at the last day all those things will be brought to light, such as midnight revels, secret murders, fraudulent dealings, and hidden hypocrisies.

2. All men's words shall be tried in judgment. God gave not the power and organ of speech to man, which is his glory and excellency above the beasts, to serve a sinful passion or corrupt humour, or to vent the froth and vanity of his own spirit, but to extol and magnify his Creator, and render him the praise of all his glorious and admirable works. Christians should employ their tongues for the honour of God, and the edification of one another. But O how wofully is this noble faculty abused by many, in cursing and swearing, lying, slandering, and detracting, and by belching forth

obscene and scurrilous speeches! The lips of many drop nothing but gall and poison, to infect and corrupt others. Now, all this must come into judgment. Our Saviour tells us, that every idle word that a man speaks, he shall give account of it in the day of judgment.

3. All men's thoughts will be tried in judgment. For Christ will 'make manifest the counsels of the heart,' 1 Cor. iv. 5. Many think now that thoughts go free; but it is not so in God's account. He knows all men's thoughts, and records them in the book of his remembrance, and at the last day they will be manifested and revealed. O what an infinite variety of thoughts is in every man's mind? This thinking faculty is never idle, but is always putting forth whole shoals of thoughts. Men have many atheistical and blasphemous thoughts, many murdering and revengeful thoughts, covetous and ambitious thoughts, unchaste and impure thoughts, vain, empty, and unprofitable thoughts, and many bold presumptuous thoughts. Now, all these must come into judgment.

Fifthly, What are the properties of this judgment?

1. It will be an universal judgment. Those that lived under the law, and those that lived under the gospel, and those that having no law were a law unto themselves, Rom. ii. 12. those that had many talents, and they that had but one, must all appear at Christ's bar. Those that were carried from the cradle to the grave, and those that stooped for age, the father and the child, the master and the servant, in a word, the whole offspring of Adam, will be judged at that day. The bowels of the earth, the bottom of the sea, and all the elements, shall give up their dead; and all the apostate angels shall then appear and receive their final doom.

2. It will be an awful judgment. It is called in scripture 'the judgment of the great day.' The immediate antecedents of Christ's appearing will make it very terrible. There will be a dreadful catastrophe of the world, which will fill men's hearts with horror and fear; the bands and ligaments of nature will then be broken asunder, and her present frame and constitution dissolved; the elements shall be reduced into their primitive confusion: the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken, Matt. xxiv. 29. There will be a strange convulsion of nature at the coming of the Lord. All the stately palaces and magnificent buildings which men doat so much upon now, will then be reduced to ashes. Again, the manner of his coming will be awful and solemn: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ

shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord,' 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. This will be such a shout as armies were wont to make when the signal of battle was given; and after this shout the trump of God shall sound. By this tremendous blast sinners shall be affrighted out of their graves; but to the saints it will carry no more terror than the roaring of cannons, when armies of friends approach a besieged city for the relief of those that are within it. And the dead being raised, they shall be gathered together before the great and awful throne on which Christ shall sit in his glory, and there they shall be exactly divided by the angels into two companies, one on the Judge's right-hand, and the other on his left. Here will be the greatest assembly that ever met; where Adam may see his numerous offspring, even as the sand upon the sea-shore, which no man can number.

3. This judgment will be exact and critical. It is the Searcher of the heart, to whom all secrets are known, that will pass this final sentence upon men. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and can penetrate into the centre of the soul. All sins, whether secret or open, shall be accounted for at that day; and the sins of men's thoughts and affections, which Satan could not accuse them of, shall then be brought into judgment. For in that day 'God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ,' Rom. ii. 16. All men's sins of omission, and their woful neglect of improving the means, advantages, and opportunities for doing or receiving good, shall be accounted for at that day. All acts of commission in youth and age, whether gross sensuality, as licentiousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries, and all excess of riot, shall be accounted for to him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead, 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5. And all acts of unrighteousness to men, yea, and sins of lesser guilt, for which the most part of men are not touched either with grief or shame while here, shall then be produced in judgment. And all the sins of men's words, which are so easily committed, but not so easily observed, shall be called to a heavy remembrance. This will be a day that will perfectly fan the world. Justice will then hold the balance in an even hand; Christ will go to work so exactly, that some divines have thought, that the day of judgment will last as long as the day of the gospel's administration hath done or shall do.

4. It will be a righteous judgment; 'He will judge the world in righteousness,' Acts xvii. 31. His knowledge of all men's characters and actions is infallibly true, and therefore his sentence upon

them will be incontestibly just, consistent with all the rules of the highest equity and justice. And the sentence he shall pass upon both saints and sinners, shall be universally applauded at that day.

5. *Lastly*, It is a final judgment, from which there can lie no appeal. Here in the world, if men judge themselves wronged in one court, they can appeal to another. But it is not so here: for this is the supreme tribunal, where the great Sovereign of heaven and earth will give judgment upon angels and men: and the sentence once passed, will immediately be put in execution, Matth. xxv. 46. Just after the sentence is pronounced by Christ, it is immediately added, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.' The sentence shall be irrevocable, and can never be repealed. It will determine the eternal state of all, and transmit them either to everlasting happiness or misery.

SIXTHLY, What are the final causes or ends of this judgment?

1. The glory of the justice and mercy of God; the former in punishing the wicked, and the latter in rewarding his friends. Many eminent displays of these attributes have been exhibited in the world, but the largest and fullest manifestation of them will be given at the last day, when the righteous judge 'shall take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,' 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. And then he shall say unto the righteous, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, Matth. xxv. 34.

2. The glory of the Lord Jesus, which will be highly manifested at that day. His first coming was obscure and without observation. For he came in the form of a servant, and was reproached and reviled by men. But then he will come in power and great glory, as the Lord and Heir of all things. At his first coming he vailed his divinity with the infirmities of flesh. But then the rays of his incomprehensible glory shall dazzle the eyes of all that behold him.—When he came first to the world, he stood before the tribunals of men, and was condemned to the cursed death of the cross; but then he will sit upon a glorious throne, and all the princes and potentates in the world shall stand trembling before him, expecting a sentence from his mouth, upon which their eternal destiny will depend. He is now seated at the right-hand of the Majesty on high; but the curtains of the heavens conceal his glory from us; and therefore there is a time fixed, when in the sight of the whole world he will manifest his glory.

3. The rewarding of men according to their works, and thereby

vindicating the providence of God from the imputation of unrighteousness in his governing the world.—Things seem to be carried with an unequal balance in the present life. The wicked prosper, as if they were rewarded for being evil; and the godly suffer, as if they were punished for being good. Yea, the virtuous and the vicious are equally miserable here. In common calamities, there is no difference between the righteous and the wicked. There is no peculiar antidote to secure them from pestilential infection; there is no strong retreat to defend them from the sword of a conquering enemy: they have no secret provisions in time of famine; for the wheat and the tares are bound in a bundle, and cast into the same fire: yea, ofttimes the godly are in the worse condition, and merely on account of their goodness. They are daily oppressed, because they do not make resistance; and loaded with sufferings, because they endure them with patience. They are for God's sake made the spectacles of extreme misery, while the insolent defyers of his majesty and laws enjoy all manner of visible felicity. And therefore, for the vindication of his justice, there must be a day of retribution, wherein God will reward every man according to his works. Divine justice requires that there should be a different procédure with those that differ among themselves; that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil; and that every man should reap according to what he hath sown.

Use 1. Labour to get a firm belief and persuasion of this great and awful truth. Alas! the most part of men are so busied about the affairs of this present life, that they do not mind the future. These awful words, *death*, *judgment*, and *eternity*, make no more impression upon their hearts, than if they were words of no signification. This is a truth of the greatest importance, and therefore is clearly and plentifully revealed in the holy scripture. Hearken then to the voice of this heavenly oracle, and believe and tremble at the thoughts of this awful day.

2. Think frequently on this terrible judgment, that the belief of it may be powerful on your hearts and lives. One great cause of men's woful neglect of duty is the want of serious thoughts concerning Christ's second coming. This renders them lazy and secure, so that they make no provision for it: but where it is firmly believed, and duly thought upon, O how active and diligent does it make them! It had this effect on Paul, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10, 11. Many put this day far away, and set it at a remote distance from them; and this makes them stupid and secure. I have read of a minister, who in a sermon described the last judgment in all its terrors, with such ardent expressions, and those animated with such an affecting voice,

and such an inflamed countenance and action, that his hearers broke forth into passionate cries, as if the Judge himself had been present to pass the final sentence upon them. In the height of their commotion, the preacher bade them stop their tears and passions, for he had one thing more to add, the most affecting and astonishing consideration of all the rest, namely, that, within less than a quarter of an hour, the memory and regard of that which so transported them would vanish, and their affections return to their carnal objects in their usual manner. The neglect of serious consideration makes even the doctrine of eternal judgment to become without efficacy. It is needful, therefore, that the belief of this truth be so firmly seated in the heart, that it may engage the attention of the thoughts, and may have a royal power over the will and affections, that so our lives may be ordered according to its rules. Serious thoughts of this awful day would prove the most effectual restraint from sin: and particularly it would have a notable efficacy in keeping them back from secret sins, and deprive the devil of one of his greatest advantages against men, arising from solitude and secrecy. It would be a powerful remedy against sensual temptations, which so easily ensnare the hearts of men; and would change the apprehensions of the mind, alter the taste of the appetite, and make the most enticing and irresistible lusts the objects of our greatest detestation.

3. We should fear and tremble at the thoughts of this awful day. The great ones in the world that are most powerful and unruly, may hence see that there is a power above them. Many oppose Christ and his interest now, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us,' Psal. ii. 3. But they should remember that 'he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision,' verse 4. The day is hastening on, when he shall speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure,' ver. 5. He 'will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel,' ver. 9. The day is coming, when he shall appear in his power and great glory, and all the opposers of his cause and interest shall be sisted before his throne, and hear this dreadful sentence pronounced against them: 'Those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me,' Luke xix. 27.

4. Then this should make the saints patient under all their trials and sufferings. They have no reason to be ashamed of suffering disgrace for Christ; for he will abundantly reward them at the great day. Whatever injustice they have got from men, they will have righteous judgment from God. This should make them des-

pise the reproaches and censures of their most malicious adversaries. There is a day appointed, wherein oppressed innocence shall obtain the noblest victory, and disgraced godliness the most public and highest honour. They may suffer under the tyranny of time, but they shall reign in the kingdom of eternity. The belief of this is enough to make them glory in the sharpest tribulations, and joyfully triumph over Satan with his perverted malignant world, Heb. xi. 25, 26. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

5. *Lastly*, Make the Judge your friend in time, by receiving and embracing him as your only Saviour, offered to you as such in the gospel; and give all diligence that ye may be found in him, clothed with his righteousness, in that terrible day. There will be no standing before his awful tribunal, unless you be clothed in the garments of your elder brother; and there will be no access into the guest-chamber, unless ye have on the wedding-garment of imputed righteousness. Therefore kiss the Son, and be reconciled to him, and so shall ye appear before him as your Judge at the last day. Acquaint now yourselves with him, and be at peace; for thereby good shall come unto you, particularly that of a solemn acquittal in the last judgment. But if ye will not now submit unto the sceptre of his grace and righteousness, and subject yourselves to him as your only rightful Lord and Sovereign, willing to have him to reign over you, and to be ruled by his laws, ye shall not be able to stand in judgment, but be condemned with his enemies, and have your eternal habitation in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, be persuaded to flee from the wrath to come, and so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

OF THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION.

TITUS III. 5.—*He saved us,—by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

HAVING taken a view of our glorious Redeemer, in his person, incarnation, offices, and his twofold state of humiliation and exaltation, let us now proceed to consider the application of that redemption which he purchased for us by his obedience and death.

If we cast our eyes backward to the preceding words, we find, (1.) Our wretched natural state, ver. 3. 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.' This is a dreadful picture of the depravity and misery of human nature; in which not only Pagans, who lived without God in the world, but Jews the peculiar people of God, of which nation was Paul, were deeply involved. (2.) Redemption purchased for us by Jesus Christ, which is the way in which the love of God to man appeared. And this redemption is as extensive as the wretched condition of man. As all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, are by nature in a state of wretchedness, so redemption was purchased by Christ for both, and both are warranted to come to Christ for it; though none but the elect among both will obtain it. And in the text we have the application of that redemption, *He saved us, &c.* In which we have,

1. Sinful creatures made partakers of Christ's redemption. *He saved us.* He speaks of himself and other saints yet in the world, whom he says God has saved, saved by virtue of Christ's death, from sin and wrath, put them into a state of, and given them a right to, eternal complete salvation.

2. How they are made partakers of this redemption.—Where we may observe, (1.) The impulsive cause: 'not according to our *good* works,' these were not the moving causes of our salvation; but 'his own mercy:' the same mercy that moved him to send our Redeemer, moved him to apply the redemption purchased by him. (2.) The way and manner of accomplishing it: *By the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* The Holy Spirit makes the application of that redemption, regenerating us, whereof baptism is the sign, and so renewing and making us new creatures. Thus, Christ made the salve for our sore, by his obedience and death, and the Spirit applies it. Hence we have a proper answer to that.

Quest. 'How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?'

DOCT. *Ans.* 'We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.'

In handling this subject, I shall,

I. Consider the purchase of this redemption.

II. The application of it.

III. Apply the subject in some practical uses.

1. As to the purchase of redemption or salvation spoken of in the text, five things are to be considered.

I. What the redemption is. 1. It is a deliverance by payment of a price, 1 Pet. i. 18. 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,' &c. Sinners were the lawful captives of justice, Isa. xlix. 24. 'Shall the lawful captive be delivered?' And without shedding of blood there is no remission. This redemption consists of two parts. (1.) Deliverance from evil. (2.) Restoration to the good lost. (1.) Deliverance from sin, the chief evil, Matth. i. 21. 'He shall save his people from their sins.' This is the house of bondage which our Redeemer finds all his people in, where they are in chains held fast to their drudgery. He came to deliver them and set them free from this slavery, Rom. vi. 6, 7. 'Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead, is freed from sin.' (2.) Deliverance from wrath, 1 Thess. i. ult.—'Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.' The wages of sin being death, even eternal destruction of the sinner in hell, all mankind were liable unto it: but now a ransom is paid, whereby there is purchased to sinners freedom from wrath, the taking off the sentence of death lying on them, whereby they were bound to everlasting misery.

2. Redemption includes in it a restoration to the good lost or a possession of all that happiness and all those blessings which men forfeited by the primitive transgression, which may all be summed up in eternal life, begun in every believer in this world, and perfected in the world of glory.

3. Who purchased this redemption. Even Jesus Christ, the Son, of God in our nature, 1 Thess. i. ult. forecited. He took on him our nature, and became our near kinsman, that he might redeem the slaves and the captives, and redeem to them their mortgaged inheritance. For he made a full redemption, not only buying sinners from under the curse, but withal purchasing for them the blessing they had forfeited. This was a work too great for any lower person: rivers of oil would not have done it; the stock of angels could not have answered this strait of mankind. But God 'laid help upon one that is mighty,' Psal. lxxxix. 19.

4. What was the ransom paid. All that Christ did and suffered for sinners comes under the name of the *ransom*. For he himself was the ransom, 1 Tim. ii. 6. 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.' He did not give gold, money, or lands, for us; for such mean things could not have been accepted: but he gave himself for us: 'Who gave himself for me,' says Paul, Gal. ii. 20. He gave body for body, soul for soul, bare our sins in his own body, and made his soul an offering for sin. And as our ransom,

(1.) He obeyed, gave punctual perfect obedience unto all the commands of the law, and so fulfilled all righteousness. Whereas we were born sinners, he was born holy; whereas we lived sinners, keeping none of the commands, he lived sinless, and kept them all. So that the law had all its demands of obedience from him.

(2.) He suffered and bare what the law threatened; and so satisfied justice in the room of sinners. Both these we have, Gal. iv. 4, 5. 'When the fulness of time was come God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,' Phil. ii. 8. 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Hence, when the scripture attributes our redemption to his blood, Eph. i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. it is not to be understood exclusively of his obedience and other sufferings, but of his bloody death, which was the completing of the ransom; John xix. 30. Jesus cried, 'It is finished:' and therefore his blood is named, as supposing the other parts of his obedience and sufferings; as if one should say, that a man is delivered from prison, by one's paying the utmost farthing for him.

5. For whom this redemption was purchased. The ransom paid was sufficient for the redemption of all mankind; but the elect only were actually redeemed; it was designed for them only; John x. 15. 'I lay down my life for the sheep.' Chap. xvii. 9. 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.' It is certain that many perish, and that satisfaction is exacted of themselves for their own debt; so that if Christ died for them, he so far died in vain, Gal. ii. 21. as I have formerly shewn at large.

II. As to the application of this redemption, consider,

1. What this application is. It is the actual interesting us in it, investing us in the possession of it, and making it effectual to us for the ends for which it was purchased; and therefore the text calls it a *saving us*. So the immediate consequent of this application is twofold.

1*st*. Deliverance from sin and the wrath of God, Rom. vi. 18.

'Being made free from sin.' Chap. viii. 1. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' The chains of guilt binding over the sinner to God's wrath are broken off: the cords are loosed, and thrown away from the prisoner; he is freed from the slavery and reigning power of lusts, and so brought out of Satan's prison.

2*dly*, Restoration to peace with, and the favour of God, and to a right and title to heaven, and, in a word, being entitled to all the benefits of Christ's purchase, and actually enjoying them in our own persons. This is the effectual application of it to us, even as a salve applied heals the sore.

2. The necessity of this application. It is so necessary that none can have saving benefit by it until it be applied, John i. 12. In contemplation of the purchased redemption, the lives of the elect are spared, and they have means of grace given them, till they be brought in to Christ. But still in the mean time they are in a state of wrath, their sins are unpardoned, and they are without actual right to the inheritance of the saints. As a remedy cannot recover a man unless it be applied; so men must die eternally, notwithstanding the death of Christ, unless his redemption be applied to them in particular, for their recovery.

3. Who applies this redemption. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to apply it. The Father sent our Redeemer: the Son purchased our redemption; and the Holy Ghost applies it, as says the text. Our Lord Jesus is the royal Bridegroom; who offers himself and all his benefits unto sinners, upon their marriage with him; it is the Holy Spirit that gains the sinner's consent, and so brings the soul to Christ, whereby it has interest in his purchase. Now,

1*st*. The outward means the Spirit makes use of for this end is the ministry of the word, 1 Cor. iii. 5. This is suited to the nature of rational creatures, wherein their sin, danger, and need of Christ, his ability and willingness to save are laid before them, and they are invited and persuaded to accept of the Redeemer, who thereby comes to their prison doors, offering them liberty; and to their bedsides, offering healing. And faith comes by hearing.

2*dly*, There is a powerful operation of the Spirit on all the faculties of the soul that accompanies it, 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. 'Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' Hereby the prison-doors are made to fly open, and the fetters to fly off, like Sampson's green withs from the devil's

captive. A new light is let into the mind, the soul is made willing to be made the Lord's only, wholly, and for ever, Psal. cx. 3. Phil. ii. 13. The conscience is quickened, the affections are spiritualized, and the whole soul is affected, so as with heart and good will to embrace Christ. And this is the proper work of the Lord's Spirit. Who else can do it? who can take of Christ's and give to poor sinners, but the Spirit of Christ? John xvi. 26.

4. Whom does he apply it to. He applies it to those, and those only, for whom it was purchased; that is, to the elect, Acts xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed.' The Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God, was privy to the counsel of peace that passed betwixt the Father and the Son from eternity: the book of life is open to him, and agreeable thereto he manages his application. Such as fall away may have slight touches of the enlightening Spirit, but they never had the spirit of sanctification resting on them for this application.

The bargain betwixt Christ and an elect soul may get many backsets; sometimes it may seem to be going fair on, and sometimes to be broken off, without hope of ever coming to again: but he will never let it blow up for altogether, but will pursue it till it be an effectual match. We may say of the Spirit in this case as Naomi did to Ruth, 'The man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing,' Ruth iii. ult.

5. *Lastly*, Whether this application be completed at once or not. It is certain, that a whole Christ, with all his benefits, is at once made over to the sinner. But as certain it is, that there are many of these benefits which they are not presently put in possession of. And therefore the complete application comes not until the last day, which therefore is called our redemption-day, Eph. iv. 30. Rom. viii. 23. Hence the Spirit is still at work in believers carrying on this work, and will never leave it, till he have perfectly united them with him, and taken away every thing that occasions distance.

APPLICATION.

Use. I. Of information. This lets us see,

1. We are poor miserable creatures without Christ, Rev. iii. 17. That we need to be saved, speaks us to be lost; that we need to be redeemed, speaks us to be in bondage. O, sinner! know that while thou art out of Christ, thou art not a free man. Nay, (1.) Thou art a prisoner of justice; for thou hast broken the law, and thou art taken and bound as in a prison and canst not escape, Isa. lxi. 1. (2.) Thou art Satan's captive, ib. Satan made war against heaven,

and engaging with innocent Adam, took him captive, and all of us in his loins; and behold thou art born and livest in captivity. (3.) Thou art the slave of sin, 2 Pet. ii. 19. Thou canst do nothing but sin, and go the round from one sin to another; for that is the only work which Satan's captives get leave to work, Rom. vi. 20.

2. See the need ye have of the application of Christ's redemption. Ye need to have an interest in Christ, to have Christ applied to your souls, as much as ever a poor captive needs the applying of a ransom, or the sick man of a remedy; without which the former must die in the pit, and the latter of his disease, without remedy. The ransom may be paid, and the remedy provided; but if they be not applied, it is all one to the captive and sick, as if there had been no ransom nor remedy.

3. See the happiness of the saints who are converted by the Spirit. Christ and all his purchase is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. We may say of them as of the prodigal, they were lost, but now found; dead, but now alive; prisoners, but now at liberty, &c. Their guilt is now removed, the power of sin in them is broken, and the indwelling power thereof shall be taken away. Heaven is theirs, the mortgaged inheritance is bought back, and they are infeft in it.

4. The Holy Spirit is a divine person, not a divine attribute; for it is his office to apply Christ's redemption to sinners, which cannot agree but to a person. He is the third person in the Godhead, to whom we owe the same faith, worship, and obedience, as to the Father and the Son. And therefore it is a more justifiable way of speaking of the Spirit to speak of the Spirit as a person, *he*, than as of a thing, *it*.

5. There is an absolute need of the Spirit's powerful working on our souls, in order to salvation. Redemption is purchased by Christ; but unless the Spirit apply it to us, we cannot have saving benefit by it. We cannot move towards the Lord in conversion, but as we are moved; for we are dead, and 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth,' John vi. 63. We are in darkness, it is the Spirit that enlightens. We are wayward, and will not turn, we must be made willing in a day of power. Therefore we have much need to seek the Spirit.

6. How just is the destruction of those that resist the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to apply Christ? If men will not have a remedy applied, they must die of their disease. If a captive will not have the ransom applied to him, he must die in the pit, since he refuses to be loosed. They that fight against the Spirit in stifling their convictions, sinning against light, their damnation is most just. They run a most dangerous risk.

7. What a glorious and great work is the work of man's salvation! At the making of man there was, as it were, a consultation of the Trinity, but the work was soon done, Gen. i. 26, 27. 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.—So God created man in his own image.' But at the recovery of man, all hands were set to work (so to speak). The Father acts his part in chusing a certain number of the lost race to be partakers of his glory, giving them unto his Son for a people, and him to them for a Redeemer. The Son takes on their nature, and redeems them with his blood, and purchases eternal salvation for them. The Holy Spirit applies that purchase unto them, renewing their natures, quickening them, and knitting them to Christ as the Head of vital influences. O! should we not admire this great and glorious work?

8. Let the Lord himself have the glory of the conversion of souls. If it be by the Spirit that redemption is applied, then it is the Spirit himself, and not man, that makes himself to differ from others. It is not that one uses his free-will better than another, but that the free Spirit looses the bands from off the will in one, and not in another.

9. *Lastly*, We may hence learn the nature of the sin unto death; which, because it does in a special manner run cross to the operation of the Spirit, tending to the application of Christ's redemption to a sinner, is called 'the sin against the Holy Ghost;' and may be thus described:

It is a rejecting, opposing, and blaspheming, of Christ and the way of salvation through him, after a man hath been clearly convinced of the truth, and tasted the goodness thereof, by the inward operation of the Holy Ghost, and that deliberately, and wilfully, and avowedly, out of malice and despite against Christ and his Holy Spirit. Here observe,

1. The object which this sin is conversant about. It strikes against the main part of the gospel, namely, Christ and the way of salvation by him. Hence they are said to 'crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,' Heb. vi. 6. Therefore, while one does not fly in the face of the way of salvation through Christ crucified, he cannot be thus guilty, though his sin be otherwise ever so heinous.

2. The actings of this forlorn sinner.

(1.) He rejects Christ, and the way of salvation through him. He will not be saved that way; he will rather run the risk of damnation than be obliged to Christ, or take him for his Saviour. Though he should die of his disease, he will not have Christ's redemption applied to him. If he has not professed that way in time

past, he downright refuses it for the time to come, Matth. xii. 24. Said the Pharisees to Christ, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils;' intimating they would have no more to do with him then, but stand off from him, as one would from the prime agent of the prince of the devils. Or if they have professed that way, they renounce it, they 'fall away,' Heb. vi. 6. not partially, but totally, quite given up with that way of salvation. Hence no person that does not quite renounce and refuse to be saved by Christ, can be guilty of this sin.

(2.) He does not only reject it for himself, but opposes it for others, using all his endeavours to root out the gospel from the earth by word and deed, pleading against that way, and persecuting it, as he has opportunity. As did the Pharisees, and those mentioned Heb. vi. 6. They 'crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.' They would do it to him personally, and actually do it to him in his members. And so those who are not arrived at this height, cannot be guilty of this sin.

(3.) He not only rejects and opposes it, but blasphemes it, reproaches and rails against Christ, and the way of salvation through him. Hence it is called 'blasphemy,' Matt. xii. 31. and 'speaking against the Holy Ghost,' ver. 32. So that neither are they guilty of this sin, that do not reproach and rail against the way of religion.

Now, this is horrible guilt; yet I must tell you, that a man may do all this, reject, oppose, and blaspheme Christ, and the way of salvation through him, and yet not be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, though indeed they are fearful advances in the way to it. For Paul did all this before his conversion, yet 'obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief.' See Matt. xii. 31. 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.' Therefore observe,

3. The qualifications of the party to whom this sin is incident. He is one that has been clearly convinced of the truth of the gospel, and has had a taste of the goodness of it by the inward operation of of the Spirit. He plainly fights in this against his own conscience, and the witness of the Holy Spirit manifested unto him. Hence it is called 'speaking against the Holy Ghost,' Matt. xii. 32. not so much against his person, as against and over the belly of his enlightening operation, not in others, but in himself. This our Lord, who knows men's hearts, discovered concerning those Pharisees mentioned Matth. xii. And Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. is plain to this purpose.

Hence those who remain under common ignorance of the truths

of the gospel, and have never had an enlightening work on them, wherein, by the inward operation of the Spirit on their souls, the gospel-way of salvation has been particularly manifested to them, both in the truth and goodness thereof; those, I say are not capable of this sin.

But for a man thus qualified to reject and blaspheme Christ, is horrible; and yet even this will not conclude a person under the guilt of this sin. For some of the saints were by Paul, when a persecutor, 'compelled to blaspheme,' no doubt against the clear light within their breasts, Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Yet their sins were pardoned, as all the sins of the saints are. And hence we may conclude, that the blasphemies which poor souls are driven into by the horrible injections of, tossings and harrassings they have from the devil, in his hour and power of darkness, cannot be the sin against the Holy Ghost, nor unpardonable. Therefore we must take in,

4. *Lastly*, The properties of these actings of this forlorn sinner. All this is done, Christ and the way of salvation are rejected, opposed, and blasphemed, by this sinner.

(1.) Deliberately and wilfully, Heb. x. 26. 'If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.' It is done out of choice, not unadvisedly, rashly, and in the hurry of a temptation, from fear or constraint. Therefore no sin of indeliberation, or weakness, or that one is hurried into against his will in any measure, or ere he is aware, can be this unpardonable sin, however heinous otherwise it may be. For so Peter denied Christ, and these saints aforesaid blasphemed.

(2.) Avowedly. This forlorn sinner comes to the light with his sin; he does not commit it secretly within his own breast, but openly in the view of the world. It is an overt speech, act, or deed; as is manifest from Matth. xii. 24. 'They said, this fellow casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils;' ver. 32. 'Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him.' Heb. vi. 6. 'They put him to open shame.' Hence it is manifest, that no thought, how horrible soever, that passeth through the heart, which one is ashamed of, and sorrow for, and cannot avow, can be this sin; for that cannot be a 'putting Christ to open shame.' And,

(3.) Maliciously. He does not this of base fear, love to the world, or some such like motive; but out of pure malice against Christ his Spirit, and the way of salvation; Heb. vi. 6. They 'crucify him, and put him to an open shame.' And x. 29. 'Who hath trodden under foot the Son of God,—and hath done despite unto

the Spirit of grace.' He is one that is downright obstinate against the Lord, maliciously rejects the way of salvation, refuses contemptuously any benefit by Christ's blood, despitefully sets himself against the Spirit in his operations for application of Christ's redemption to him. In one word, he behaves like a desperate wounded man, who tears away the plaister from his wound, and throws it at the face of the surgeon who applied it, chusing rather to bleed to death, than be saved from death by him that made it, or applied it. This is the unpardonable sin, and the unpardonable sinner, whose case is absolutely hopeless.

Hence whatever your sin be, yet if you be grieved for it, and would be content to have mercy through Christ, or desire the application of his redemption, you are not guilty of this sin.

And thus you may see how this sin becomes unpardonable, and how it is impossible to renew such again unto repentance; namely, that as the case of the sick man is desperate, who rejects the remedy, and sets himself maliciously against the physician; so that soul's case must be utterly hopeless, which maliciously, wilfully and avowedly, rejects, opposes, and blasphemes Christ the only sacrifice, and the Holy Ghost the only Sanctifier. For if one will by no means have Christ, he must needs perish, for there is no other sacrifice if they despitefully refuse his Spirit, there is no other Sanctifier. How then can they be pardoned, or brought to repentance? If one sin against the Father, as a Lawgiver, the satisfaction of the Son can take away that sin; if one sin against the Son, by unbelief or otherwise, the Holy Spirit can by his grace cure him of that; but if one will needs do despite to the Spirit of grace, and maliciously set himself against his application of Christ's redemption, there is no more hope; since there is not another person in the Godhead to cure this.

Use II. Of trial. Ye may try by this, whether ye be partakers of Christ's redemption or not, namely, if the Spirit has effectually applied it unto you. For there is no other way of partaking of it; and this never misgives. I shall give you the following marks of the Spirit's application.

Mark 1. Where the Spirit applies Christ's redemption, the wound is fully opened, and then Christ's redemption is fully applied, Luke vi. 48. 1 Cor. i. 30. Where the work is not carried through by the Spirit, either the soul's wound is so laid open that the sinner despairs, and there is no application of Christ, as in the case of Judas; or else it is not enough opened and laid out, sins of the heart, and particularly the sin of one's nature, are not so discovered, as to convince the soul of its utter impotency to good. Hence Christ is

not applied for sanctification, as well as for justification, and so not truly applied at all. But where the wound is laid open sufficiently, both in point of guilt, which the soul sees it can by no means remove, and in point of utter natural corruption, which the soul sees it cannot help; and withal the soul is brought to Christ both for righteousness and sanctification, to close with him, and depend on him for both; there the Spirit has applied Christ's redemption (1 Cor. i. 30.), laying the plaister to in the full breadth of the sore.

Mark 2. Where there is a begun delivery from the power of sin, the reign of it is broken, it has not the soul at its beck as before, Rom. vi. 14. It is true sin may prevail, because the power of it is not entirely broken, the application not being yet perfect. But the heart is habitually loosed from sin, longing to be rid of it, and endeavouring to be freed of the bonds, as the captive casting off his chains when he is coming forth of the prison, and Lazarus raised leaving his dead-clothes, Rom. vii. 24.

Use III. Of exhortation, in two branches.

First, Be deeply concerned for the application of Christ's redemption unto yourselves. Seek it, and be not satisfied without it. Make it your greatest care to be partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ. To press this, I offer the following motives.

Mot. 1. Consider what a great redemption it is, Heb. ii. 3. It is a redemption from the greatest evils, sin, and the wrath of God;—of the greatest benefits, peace with God, pardon, and eternal life;—performed by the greatest of persons, the Son of God; and could be performed by no lesser one, being above the reach of angels and men;—purchased by the paying of the greatest ransom, the blood of God.

Mot. 2. Some are made partakers of it. So says the text. The door of the treasure-house is opened to some, and they are brought in, and do partake of it. There have been before you, who have been dying of their wounds, as ye are now, and by the application of it they have been recovered, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Up then, and put in for a share in this glorious redemption.

Mot. 3. Ye need it as well as others, Eph. ii. 3. Are not ye as well as others naturally justice's prisoners, Satan's captives, and sin's slaves? Ye cannot deliver yourselves more than others could ye must perish in the pit, if ye be not partakers of this redemption. And ye are not able to bear the weight of wrath more than others. O let not your need prompt you on to it!

Mot. 4. It is in your offer this day. Our Lord is crying to you by the gospel, 'Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee,' Zech.

ix. 12. The physician is come to your bed-sides, offering you his never-failing medicines. All the benefits of Christ's purchase are offered to you. They cost him dear, but he offers them freely, though the price of blood to him: Isa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.'

Mot. 5. You will have no saving benefit by it, if it be not applied to you, John viii. 24. What will it avail you, that Christ died for the sins of his people, if ye have no interest in his death? ye must die for your own sins, and bear your own burden for evermore. There is a physician indeed; but what will ye be the better, if ye do not employ him? What though ye get his directions in the gospel? If ye do not make use of the remedy, ye will die of your disease.

Mot. 6. Nay, it will be worse for you than if there had been no redemption purchased, Heb. ii. 3. 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Matth. xi. 24. 'It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom (says Christ to Capernaum) in the day of judgment, than for thee.' It will aggravate your condemnation, that there was a ransom paid, and it was in your power, but ye slighted it. O how fearful is the slight given to the price of blood, the blood of the Son of God! The Mediator's vengeance will pursue such. And, as a thousand worms, it will at last gnaw the consciences of those that slighted it.

Mot. 7. *Lastly*, It will not always be in your offer, Luke xiv. 24, 25. Behold, now is the day of salvation. The time comes when the market of free grace will be over, and if one would ever so fain have it, they shall not get it. Therefore delay not. Ye know not but it may be out of your reach to-morrow; for ye have no reason to boast of to-morrow, as ye know not what a day may bring forth.

2*dly*, As ever ye would have the redemption purchased by Christ applied to you, and would not mar that application,

1. Beware of that treatment of the Spirit, which has a tendency thereto, yea, and leads the way to the great transgression. And beware of,

1*st*. Resisting the Spirit, Acts vii. 51. but rather fall in with him in his operations. To stave off convictions, and guard against awakenings out of a state of sin, to sin against the light, and inward checks, and to go on obstinately in sin, in opposition to calls to repentance, is to resist the Spirit. And that is most dangerous, as dangerous as for the sick man to resist the physician that would apply healing plaisters to his sores, and so fight against his own welfare.

2*dly*, Quenching the Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 19. Sometimes this holy fire begins to burn, and ye may find the heat of it: O then take heed as one who is upon the point of cure, that ye do not mar it! Do not cast water on this fire to drown it out, by sinning against light, putting out your convictions out of your hearts and heads, by sinning with a strong hand, or filling up your thoughts with worldly business, drowning them by sinful pleasures, &c. Withdraw not fuel from this fire, by neglecting the motions and operations of the Spirit. Do not smother it, by not giving them vent in prayer, and supplication, and confession before God, or in consulting with his servants in cases wherein ye need particular direction. O, why will ye ruin yourselves, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life?

3*dly*, Grieving the Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. Even believers themselves have need of the Spirit for carrying on this work of application of Christ's redemption. And they are in hazard of retarding and interrupting it, by their grieving the Spirit by gross sins, which in a special manner defile the conscience, or by sins, though smaller in their nature, yet attended with great aggravations, or by not valuing and esteeming the Spirit's graces, comforts, influences, and ordinances. These things provoke the Spirit to withdraw; and so the application of the redemption is not advanced.

4*thly*, Vexing the Spirit, Isa. lxiii. 10. It is true, the Spirit of the Lord is not subject to passions; for these are inconsistent with the infinite happiness of God; and so he cannot properly be grieved or vexed, nor disturbed. But men are said to vex the Spirit, when they treat him so as would vex one capable of vexation. This is done by often falling into the same sins, Numb. xiv. 22. especially falling into them again after a person has been convinced of the evil of them, confessed, mourned for them, and resolved against them; and much more when, besides all this, they have smarted for them. This is the great trial of divine patience, a tempting of God, and puts men in great hazard of being given up of God, Numb. xiv. 27.

Lastly, Blaspheming the Spirit in his operations. This is done by mocking at religion, or the work of the Spirit of the Lord, in others: A dangerous business, as these young blasphemers felt, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. 'And Elisha went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald-head, Go up, thou bald-head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord: and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.' Or by fathering the operations of the Spirit in ourselves

or others, on some other cause, as when religion is counted folly, soul-exercise melancholy or distraction, and communion with God delusion. Thus the Spirit, as the Spirit of regeneration and of prayer, is often blasphemed.

2. As ever ye would have the redemption purchased by Christ applied to you, labour to get the Spirit; make it your business to get him to dwell in you, and work in you. Lay out yourselves to be his habitation. Consider,

Mot. 1. Ye are by nature without the Spirit, Jude, 19. therefore ye have need to seek him. The highest principle of acting in you is your own spirit, which is so corrupted that it can do nothing truly good, John xv. 5. And being without the Spirit, ye are without God in the world, and therefore without hope, while ye are so.

Mot. 2. Ye can have no saving benefit by Christ but by the Spirit. Ye can have no interest in Christ without him, Rom. viii. 9. and no access to God through Christ, but by him, Eph. ii. 18. While ye have not the Spirit, the redemption is indeed purchased, but, alas! it is not applied to you. Christ has died, but you have no interest in him, no saving benefit by him. There is a full treasure of grace in Christ, but, alas! ye want the key to open it. The bridegroom stands ready to receive you, but there is none to bring the bride to him, and she cannot go her alone.

Mot. 3. Without the Spirit ye are spiritually dead in sin, John vi. 63. When the soul is away, the body is dead; and when the Spirit is away, the soul is dead. The man cannot move in God's way, cannot perform one duty acceptably; for nothing is so but what is done in the Spirit, John iv. 24. Hence all ordinances and providences are lost on such an one; for he is like a dead tree, to which spring and winter are alike. Hence,

Mot. 4. Without the Spirit ye are undone for ever; without the Spirit, without Christ, Rom. viii. 9. without Christ, without God; and without God, without hope; therefore 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,' Eph. ii. 12. The dead corpse may be kept a while; but when there are no hopes of the returning of the soul, it is buried in a grave: so without the Spirit ye may be kept a while, through God's patience; but the end will be, to be cast into the pit, and buried out of God's sight.

Mot. last. If ye get the Spirit, ye are made up for ever. For he is the leading benefit of Christ's purchase, which all the rest infallibly follow, Zech. xii. 10. When the Spirit comes, life comes, that shall never fail, John iv. 14. He will unite you to Christ, and then all is yours. He will enlighten, quicken, renew and sanctify you,

subdue your corruptions, give grace, actuate and increase it, change you from glory to glory, and raise up your bodies at the last day to glory, Rom. viii. 11.

I shall conclude all with a few directions.

1. Pray earnestly for the Spirit, Luke xi. 13. God has made a promise of the Spirit, and gives that as a ground of your prayer for him, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 37. 'A new Spirit will I put within you.—I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' And although God regard not prayer as performed by one without the Spirit, yet he regards it as a means and ordinance of his own appointment, whereby the Spirit is conveyed into the hearts of his elect.

2. Wait and look for the Spirit in all ordinances of his appointment, Isa. xxxii. ult. They that would have the wind blow upon them, go out into the open air; though they cannot raise it, they wait where it blows, John iii. 8. Especially the preaching of the gospel is to be attended diligently for this end, 2 Cor. iii. 8. The man that had lain many years at the pool, at length saw the time that the angel moved the waters.

3. *Lastly*, Give up yourselves to the Spirit, Jer. xxxi. 18. Lay yourselves down at his feet, to be enlightened, quickened, and sanctified by him. Open the door of your hearts to receive him. And when the least good motion is found kindled in your hearts, cherish it as a tender bud of heaven; nourish the spark, and it will increase into a flame.

OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

1 CORINTHIANS xii. 13.—*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

THE apostle in the preceding verse having asserted, that Christ mystical, *i. e.* Christ and believers, are one, making but one mystical body, in the words of the text does at once explain and confirm the same from the two sacraments of the New Testament, baptism, and the Lord's supper.

1. From the sacrament of baptism, where he shews us the blessed union made. And here consider,

1*st*. The parties united: on the one hand, *we all;* viz. who believe in Christ, as distinguished from unbelievers. On the other hand, Jesus Christ, whom he had just before mentioned, and who is here understood as implied in the one body, whereof he is the head, or principal part.

2*dly*, The uniting or joining of the parties, which is expressed by being *baptized into one body*, the sacramental sign being put for the thing signified: as if he had said, we are united into one body with Christ, which is signified and sealed by our baptism.

3*dly*, The efficient cause of the union, or the party uniting us to Christ, *one Spirit*, the one Spirit of Christ. It is by him we are baptized, and are joined to Christ. He casts the indissoluble knot; as Christ brings us to the Father, the Holy Spirit brings us to Christ, by faith which he works in us, and makes the marriage-tie between the King of saints and the daughter of Zion. This Spirit must needs be the infinite Spirit of God, since it is but one Spirit that knits all, not only as the author, but the bond of the union.

4*thly*, The result of this union, *one body*. Hence it comes to pass, that Christ and all believers are one mystical body; they are all joined to Christ and among themselves, as the head and members.

5*thly*, The character of the parties whom the Spirit unites to Christ. He confines not himself to any one party of sinners in the world, but takes them indifferently out of all sorts, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be bond or free men. He goes to unbelieving Jews that had rejected Christ for some time, and to unbelieving Gentiles that had not heard of him. And he unites them to Christ by working faith in them; for he deals with them that have reason, not as with stocks, knitting them without any action of their own, but as rational creatures, apprehending them, and working faith in them, whereby they apprehend Christ.

2. From the sacrament of the Lord's supper, where he shews us the blessed fruit of this union, *and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* Here consider,

1*st.* The common benefit, the purchase of Christ's redemption; *one Spirit*, the leading comprehensive purchase of Christ's death. This is that Spirit poured out on Christ without measure, to be communicated for life, and supplies of life, to all that come to him.

2*dly*, The participation of that benefit, which is expressed by being *made to drink into one Spirit*, the sacramental sign for the thing signified: As if he had said, We all partake of Christ's Spirit more and more to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, which is as necessary to us as drink to strengthen our bodies, which is signified and sealed by the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

3*dly*, The parties made partakers thereof, *we all*, who are united to Christ. As life goes before eating or drinking, so the union with Christ goes before communion in and partaking of the benefits of his redemption; and the former is the cause of the latter.

Hence we may see, That 'the Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.'

The great subject to be handled here, is the union betwixt Christ and believers. And here let us consider,

I. How Christ's redemption is applied to a sinner.

II. Shew that there is a real union betwixt Christ and believers.

III. What is that union.

IV. What are the bonds of it.

V. Who is the author and efficient cause of it.

VI. The properties of it.

VII. Apply.

1. Let us consider how Christ's redemption is applied to a sinner. It is done by way of uniting the sinner to Christ, as a plaister is applied to a sore, by laying the one upon the other. A sinner is interested in, and put in possession of Christ's redemption through union with him, 1 Cor. i. 30. 'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus.' Men must not think to stand afar from Christ, and partake of the benefits of his death, upon their praying to him for it, as the beggar on his crying gets of the rich man's money thrown to him; which I observe is the soul ruining notion many have of this matter. But he must unite with Christ, and so partake of the redemption purchased by Christ, as the poor widow drowned in debt, by marrying the rich man, is interested in his substance. It is with Christ himself that all saving benefits are given, Rom. viii. 32; and without him none such are received. Believe it, Sirs, that as Adam's sin could never

have hurt you, unless ye had been in him, so Christ's redemption shall never savingly profit you, unless ye be in him, Eph. i. 7. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' I shall next shew,

II. That there is a real union betwixt Christ and believers. Some, to advance their legal scheme of doctrine, acknowledge no other union but a relative one betwixt Christ and believers, such as may be betwixt persons and things wholly separated. But that there is a real, true, and proper union betwixt Christ and believers, is evident if ye consider,

1. The several equivalent terms by which this union is expressed in scripture. Christ is said to be in believers, Col. i. 27. Rom. viii. 10. and they in him, 1 Cor. i. 30. He is said to dwell in them, and they in him, John vi. 56. They are said to abide in one another, John xv. 4. Believers have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. They are so joined, or agglutinated, as to be one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. To expound these of a mere relative union, such as is betwixt a king and his subjects, a master and his servants, is but to wrest scripture, and these phrases applied to such relatives would be extremely harsh, though they never so much agreed in judgment and affection.

2. The several real and proper unions which it is resembled to. It is resembled unto that betwixt the vine and the branches, John xv. 5. the head and the body, Eph. i. 22, 23. meat eaten and the eater, John vi. 56. yea, to that betwixt the Father and Christ, John xvii. 21. These are real proper unions, and so is this.

3. *Lastly*, If this union be not a true and real one, but a mere relative one, the sacrament of the supper is but a bare sign, and not a seal, exhibiting and applying Christ to believers. For without this real union, the feeding on Christ's body and blood truly and really in the sacrament cannot be; which yet is the doctrine of the scriptures, and of our Larger Catechisms, proved from the words of institution, 'Take, eat, this is my body.' For if there be a true and real feeding, there must be a true and real union, as there is betwixt the food and our bodies into which it is incorporated.

III. I proceed to shew what is that union that takes place betwixt Christ and believers. There are three mysterious unions in our religion. (1.) The substantial union of the three persons in one Godhead. (2.) The personal union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. (3.) The mystical union betwixt Christ and believers, which is that wherein Christ and believers, are so joined, that they are one Spirit, and one mystical body, 1 Cor. vi. 17. and xii. 13.

In this union the whole man is united to a whole Christ. The believing soul is united to him, Eph. iii. 17. His body also is

united to him, 1 Cor. vi. 19. 1 Thess. iv. 14. They are united to him in his divine nature, Col. i. 27. and in his human nature, Eph. v. 30. and so through the Mediator unto God, 2. Cor. vi. 16.

IV. I go on to shew what are the bonds of this union, whereby Christ and believers become one. All corporal union is made by contact; but Christ is in heaven, and we on earth, and so we can have no such union with him; and if we had, what would it profit? John vi. 63. But this union is spiritual, 1 Cor. vi. 17. and so are the bonds of it. And they are two.

1. The Spirit on Christ's part, whereby he apprehendeth, taketh and keepeth hold of us, 1 John iii. ult. The same infinite Spirit that dwells in Christ, he communicates to his elect in their effectual calling, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. So that one Spirit living and acting in both, in Christ as the head, and in believers as the members, they truly become one by that means. And the distance betwixt Christ and believers, as great as is betwixt heaven and earth, cannot hinder the joining of our souls and bodies to his, since the Spirit is an infinite Spirit, everywhere present. And seeing the same Spirit is in both, they are thereby made really one, notwithstanding the distance; even as if there were a man standing on the earth whose head should reach the stars; yet since one soul animates his head and feet, notwithstanding the distance betwixt them, (as well as those of the lowest dwarf), they do still make but one body. And as in the case of a tree-leg fixed to the body, and touching upon it, it is not for all that a part of the body, because it is not animated by the soul; so, on the other hand, where one spirit is in two, there is a real union, although these two do not touch one another, as in the case of Ezekiel's wheels, Ezek. i. 21. All which shews that there is nothing contrary to reason in this union.

2. Faith on the believer's part, Eph. iii. 17. 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Thereby the believer apprehends, takes, and keeps hold of Christ. It is by that we receive Christ, John i. 12. come unto him, John vi. 35. and feed on him, ver. 56. This faith is that true one, whereby a sinner heartily receives and rests on Christ for all his salvation. And no distance can hinder it to ascend unto the Mediator.

Now, since Christ cannot be seen with our eyes, nor touched with our hands, while he is in heaven and we are on earth, and that he is not known to us but by his word of the gospel, what other way can we unite with him, but believing on this unseen Christ? So that faith is the only mean on our part. And its fitness for this work appears, if ye consider,

(1.) That faith is a self-emptying and creature-emptying grace,

throwing off and putting away all those things that might keep the soul at a distance from Christ, Phil. iii. 8. And,

(2.) It is as much fitted to receive an unseen Christ and salvation, which appears to us only in the word, as the hand to receive what can be received into it. For in the word Christ offers himself and all his salvation to us, which we cannot lay hold of by any bodily action whatsoever; but faith crediting the testimony, consenting to, and resting on the offered Christ, with his salvation, does actually get the same, as sure as there is truth in the word of the gospel.

V. The next head is to shew who is the author and efficient cause of this union. The party that makes this blessed union is the Holy Spirit of Christ, and none other, as the text tells us. As our Lord Jesus Christ took his own human nature into personal union with him, in the womb of the virgin Mary, by the agency of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her, Luke i. 35. so he takes sinners into mystical union with him, by the agency of this same Spirit. We may take it up thus:

1. The Spirit of Christ comes in the word, and enters into the heart of the elect sinner dead in sin. The word is the great vehicle of divine appointment, wherein the Spirit is given, Gal. iii. 2. And in that he comes and makes room for himself, and takes it up, 1 Thess. i. 5. John vi. 63. And the Spirit is a Spirit of life, a Spirit of faith, and one with Christ, as he is one of the three persons in the one Godhead. So that when he is come into the soul, it is quickened, changed, regenerated, and really united to Christ passively, in so far as the Spirit is Christ's Spirit.

2. That quickening Spirit now entered into the elect soul works faith in it; and thus only true faith is wrought, not from our natural powers, Eph. ii. 8. Col. ii. 12. Hereby the soul lays hold on Christ, and actually unites with him. Being quickened and actuated by the Spirit, it acts in believing.

The whole may be illustrated by the case of Lazarus rising from the dead. With the voice of Christ, 'Lazarus come forth,' his soul re-entered into his body, so he was alive again; and being alive and quickened, he moved and came forth unto Christ. So the dead soul, being quickened by the Spirit coming into it, moves and comes into Christ. And thus ye may see,

That there is a twofold receiving of Christ. (1.) A passive receiving of him, wherein Christ comes in by his Spirit into the dead soul, quickening it, and joins himself unto that soul. Here the soul does nothing, but is inhabited by Christ, through the Spirit, which disposeth the sinner to believe. And this is the case of gracious

infants, who are truly united to Christ, though because of their infancy they cannot act faith. (2.) An active receiving of him, when the soul having faith wrought in it by the Spirit actually believes, and receives Christ, putting forth the hand of the soul to embrace him, and so actively joins itself unto the Lord.

VI. I proceed to show the properties of this union. I have anticipated some of these, under other heads already, and shown you that it is,

1. A true, real, and proper union, not a mere relative one.

2. A spiritual union, 1 Cor. vi. 17. 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.' Though it is an union of bodies as well as of spirits, yet the union is not corporal, for the bodies do not touch one another; but spiritual, being joined by spiritual bands. I add, that it is,

3. A mysterious union. The apostle calls it a 'great mystery,' Eph. v. 32; 'a glorious mystery,' Col. i. 27.—And therefore, by the by, it is not a mere relative union, but a true and real one; for a relative union betwixt Christ and believers, is no mystery, but a plain truth easily acknowledged by all, and perceived. But there is need of a true, lively, humble faith to believe this, which is so far above the reach of our natural capacities, and which natural reason is so ready to object against; but faith will believe it over all these impediments.

4. A most close and intimate union. They are joined as those things that are glued together, 1 Cor. vi. 17. The believer has Christ in him, and he is in Christ; and they are united as the meat with the body, which is incorporated into it, John vi. 56. See Eph. v. 30.

5. An indissoluble union. Once in Christ, ever in him, John x. 28, 29. What man will lose a member of his body, if he can help it? Who then can imagine that Christ will lose a member of his? The apostle bids a defiance to all things for separating the saints from the love of Christ, and consequently from union with him, that is the ground of the love of complacency, Rom. viii. 35, &c. This union abides uninterrupted by death: for sleeping saints sleep in Christ, while in the grave, 1 Thess. iv. 14.

6. *Lastly*, It is the leading, comprehensive, fundamental privilege of believers, 1 Cor. iii. 23. 'Ye are Christ's.' All their other privileges are derived from and grafted upon this, their justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. All these grow on this root; and where that is wanting, none of these can be. All acceptable obedience comes from the soul's union with Christ, John xv. 4. Hence faith is the principal grace, as uniting us to Christ.

I proceed now to the application of this subject. I shall press out the juice of this pomegranate unto you in uses of information, trial, and exhortation.

Use I. Of information. It informs us,

1. Concerning the saints in general, that they are highly dignified beyond all the rest of the world. They are all members of Christ, of the blood royal of heaven, even those of them that some would disdain to rub shoulders with, Eph. v. 30. And thus we have these lessons.

(1.) Wo to those that maltreat, oppress, or persecute any of the saints; for what they do against them, they do against Christ, as doing it to the members of Christ's body, Acts ix. 4. And he will resent it, and plead the cause as his own cause, accurately and exactly, so as to make men accountable for omissions of duty to them, far more for commissions of evil against them, Matth. xxv. 42—45. So that the Saints have good reason to lay aside all thoughts of revenge; for their Redeemer is mighty.

(2.) They are the best bestowed good turns that are done to the godly for Christ's sake. For as they are done to them, they are done to Christ, since they are one with him. And our Lord will take it so, and graciously reward it, Mat. xv. 35—40. Therefore the apostle gives that exhortation, Gal. vi. 10. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' Have ye any love to Christ? love is communicative; ye cannot reach the Head, but the members ye have always with you. Say not then ye want occasion to testify your love to him. It is the best seed ye can sow and will bring the most plentiful harvest.

(3.) Believers are members one of another, Eph. iv. 25.—There is a true and real sibness betwixt all the godly, as there is betwixt the legs and arms of one body, or one leg and another. For since they are all united to Christ, it necessarily follows that they are all united among themselves, 1 Cor. xii. 12. And therefore they are called 'one bread,' having an union and communion among themselves, sealed by the sacrament. O! if this great truth were believed, what love, what sympathy, what care for one another's temporal and spiritual welfare would there be among the godly! There would not be such strangeness, alienation of affections, nor such a Cain like unconcernedness about one another among them.

(4.) It is a thankless office to rend and divide the church of Christ, to tear Christ's seamless coat. Many make no bones of separating from, but place religion in, casting off, communion with those, who, their consciences must acknowledge, do yet remain

united to Christ. They say, they can have no communion with them without sin. I grant, that if one leg go into a mire and be defiled, the other ought not to follow, nor one saint communicate with another in sin; ay, but no man in his wits would cut off either of the legs in that case. But the body of Christ is not so tenderly handled, though we owe more tenderness to it than to our natural bodies. Nay, but let men abhor communion with such as much as they will, they shall either have the most close and intimate communion with them, or they shall have none with Christ, forasmuch as there are not two Christ's to head the separate bodies; and if they be both united to one Christ, they have the most intimate union and communion one with another.

2. It informs us concerning some great and weighty principles of our holy religion, clearly deducible from this grand point.

(1.) The saints shall persevere in grace, and can never totally nor finally fall away from it. For there is an indissoluble union betwixt Christ and them. This secures the believer's life, that it can never be lost, Col. iii. 3. The Spirit, the bond of this union, never leaves his habitation, John xiv. 16. and iv. 14. This keeps a seed always in him for God, 1 John iii. 9. And Christ will lose none of his members, John xvii. 12. It is true, if the firmness of this union depended entirely on the hold the sinner has of Christ by faith, it might be broke; but it depends on the hold that Christ has of the sinner by his Spirit, as the nurse has of the babe in her arms.

(2.) Faith in Christ is the great comprehensive gospel-duty. Many have mean thoughts of faith, in comparison of other duties. But the scripture gives it the preference, John vi. 29. 1 John iii. 23. When we bid you believe, we bid you get all privileges, and do all duties; for believing is the way to both, in so far as it unites the soul to Christ, which is the fundamental privilege of the saints. If ye believe, ye do all in effect, as he who takes hold of the first link of a chain, has hold of all the links. If ye believe not, ye do nothing; for without faith, ye are without Christ, and without Christ ye can do nothing, John xv. 5. compare Heb. xi. 6.

(3.) There is a solid rational ground for the doctrine of our justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Let profane men deride it as a putative or imaginary righteousness and justification, to make way for their own works; and let the corrupters of the Protestant doctrine set up faith, repentance, and new obedience, as our evangelical righteousness, upon which we are justified, as the fulfilling of the gospel-law; we need no other righteousness for justification but Christ's. For a believer is by faith united to Christ. Having this union with him, we have a communion with him in his

righteousness, which is ours, since we are one with him, and being ours, must be imputed to us, or reckoned ours on the most solid ground. Christ is the believer's Surety by his own voluntary act, the debtor's consent by faith, the Judge's approbation in the word. What then is more rational than that this righteousness be imputed to the believer, and he thereupon justified?

(4.) The way to obtain true repentance and sanctification, is to believe. For these are the benefits of Christ's redemption, Acts v. 31. Matth. i. 21. and these are applied by the Spirit working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. How can one think to repent truly, or to be holy, when he is not united to Christ, John xv. 5. or to be united without faith? As soon shall the falling dew pierce through the rock, as one shall be able to do any of these out of Christ, whom the Father has constituted the head of influences, and on whom all our fruitfulness depends.

(5.) *Lastly*, The bodies of believers shall have a glorious resurrection, Rom. viii. 11. There is an union betwixt Christ and the bodies of believers, which death does not break off, 1 Thess. iv. 14. and therefore they shall not always lie in the dust; nor will Christ lose any of his members. The Lord says to a dying saint as to Jacob, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4. 'I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt [the grave]—I will go down with thee into Egypt [the grave]; and I will also surely bring thee up again.'

3. This doctrine informs us concerning the happiness of the saints. To be united with Christ is the foundation of all happiness, and the richest privileges.

(1.) Christ is theirs, Cant. ii. 16. 'My Beloved is mine,' says the spouse. They have an interest in his person. He is their Lord, their Elder Brother, their Husband, yea, their Head. Whatsoever he is, or is in him, they may reckon upon it as theirs, for to make them happy. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him, and so God is their God and their Father, John xx. 17. His mercy is theirs to pity them, his power to protect them, his all-seeing eye to direct them, &c. Thus they have a fountain to go to that never runs dry, a treasure that is never exhausted, a table that will never be drawn, &c.

(2.) What Christ has is theirs, and he is the heir of all things, so all is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. He has all that has him to whom all things belong. Union infers a communion betwixt Christ and believers. His active and passive obedience is theirs for their justification, as if they had done it themselves. His Spirit, word, and providences, are theirs for their sanctification. His power in hea-

ven is theirs for their glorification. In a word, his broad covenant, with all the precious promises in it, is theirs to make them happy here and hereafter, 2 Pet. i. 4.

(3.) They are perfectly safe from the wrath of God, Rom. viii. 1. 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' Their sins are still very displeasing in the sight of God, and deserve condemnation as well as those of others. But being in Christ, they are beyond the reach of the curse of the law; they are got into the city of refuge, where the avenger of blood cannot attack them. They are under the mild government of the covenant of grace, which threatens fatherly anger and temporal chastisements in case of transgression, but no more, Psal. lxxxix. 30.—33.

(4.) The Lord takes pleasure in and accepts their persons, graces and duties, though attended with manifold imperfections. Their persons are accepted, though a body of death hangs about them, Eph. i. 6. Their graces, though there is much dross in them, yet because the image of Christ is on them, they are accepted, Cant. v. 1. Their duties, though far from the perfection which the law requires, are accepted, Cant. ii. 14. Their will is accepted for the deed, and their grief for the want of will, for the will itself, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

(5.) All their wants lie upon Christ, Col. ii. 10. As the union gives them a communion with him in what is his, so he has a communion with them in what is theirs; so that Christ is to answer for all their debt, poverty, and wants, as he that marries the widow in debt, Psal. lv. 22. So they look and may look to him for all, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Use II. Ye may try by this, whether the Spirit has applied to you the redemption purchased by Christ. If so be, then ye are united to Christ. If men only apply that redemption to themselves, it will be found presumption, and not faith, and no union with Christ; and the plaister thus applied will not stick. But where the right application is made, there the sinner is united to Jesus Christ. Ye may try whether ye be united to Christ or not by these marks. The general *Mark* is, If ye be disjoined from what ye were formerly knit to, and carried to Christ for all. It is with the soul united to Christ as with an ingrafted branch, which is broken from off the tree it naturally grew on, and is joined to another, from which it draws all the sap. If ye be united to Christ, ye are disjoined and broken off from the natural stock, and ingrafted into Christ. Ye may take up this in these three things.

1. Ye have given up with the law as a covenant of works, and betaken yourselves wholly to the grace of Christ in the second co-

venant. That is to be 'dead to the law, *and* married to Christ,' Rom. vii. 4. Ye are broken off from all your natural confidences before the Lord, founded on anything whatsoever that is not Christ or in Christ, and lay your whole confidence before the Lord on him. So that he is your all in point of confidence before the throne, Phil. iii. 8. This is a sure evidence, Phil. iii. 3; Matth. v. 3. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit;' where it is observable, that this leads the van, and is to be carried through all the rest of the duties and graces following. This is the very nature of faith as it unites to Christ.

2. Your hearts are separated and disjoined from sin, and labouring to take up their everlasting rest in Christ, as the centre of your desires, Psalm cxix. 128. and lxxiii. 25. Men's desires naturally go out after the world and their lusts, and if they have any desires after Christ, it is but a desire of him together with their lusts. But grace turns the heart against these, and kindles desires of Christ, instead of lusts, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. This is a sure evidence, Matth. v. 6. It is true, while here the saints are not separated from sin in action, Psal. lxv. 3. But in affection they are, Rom. vii. 24. and in that respect Christ has the crown, and lusts the cross, Gal. v. 24. And thus God judges of them, 2 Cor. viii. 12. 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.'

3. Ye are carried out of yourselves into Jesus Christ, Matth. xvi. 24. To a natural man his sweet self is his all; but grace turns self off the throne, and sets up Christ in its stead. While the man is separated from Christ, he has separate interests from him: but when united to Christ, these are all swallowed up in Christ's interest, as the rivers, when they go into the sea, have no more their separate channels. Ye know the difference betwixt a married and an unmarried woman. The unmarried woman lives upon her own, and pleases herself; the married lives on her husband's, and pleases him. Such is the difference betwixt one separated from, and one united to Christ, Psal. xlv. 10.

(1.) The soul in a state of separation from Christ lives on its own, acts from itself as the highest principle, stands on its own legs, as it were, and takes its own weight to bear (Prov. xxviii. 26.) in point of sanctification. It is like that nominal marriage, Isa. iv. 1. 'And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.' And therefore such a one is called 'sensual, having not the spirit,' Jude, ver. 19. one that has no higher principle than his own soul.

The soul united to Christ lives on his, or by him, John vi. 57. Being sensible of its utter impotency for good, it flees to him, his Spirit and grace, and relies on him for strength, Jer. xxxi. 18. This is the life of faith. The one, like Goliah, goes forth in confidence of his strength, sword, and spear; the other, like the stripling David, goes forth in the name of the Lord. This is a sure evidence, Phil. iii. 3; Cant. viii. 5.

(2.) The man in a state of separation lives for himself, as his chief end, in point of sanctification too, Hos. x. 1. In what good he does, his great end is to serve and please himself, not to serve and please the Lord. And it can be no otherwise with the natural man; for as the mouth of a river can be no higher than its spring, so he that acts from himself can never but act for self. And thus God regards not their service.

But the man united to Christ lives to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 7, 8, Phil. i. 21. The gracious soul, like the married woman, cares how to please her husband, would fain be holy, and endeavours to be so, that she may be like him. The soul united to Christ is not barren of good works, John xv. 5; but brings them forth to him, Rom. vii. 4; the great end of their duties being not to content themselves, but to walk before him in all well-pleasing. This also is a sure evidence, Phil. i. 21. 'To me to live is Christ.'

Use ult. Of exhortation. O be exhorted,

1. To be deeply concerned for union with Christ. O, sinner, take no rest till thou be in him. Seek to unite with him, and live no longer in a state of separation from him. To press this, consider,

Mot. 1. Thou may be doing, but thou canst do nothing to purpose, while not united to Christ, John xv. 5. None of thy duties will be accepted of God, however great they be in thy own eyes, or those of others, Eph. i. 6. An ox offered on the altar of Bethel would have been rejected, when two young doves were accepted on the altar of Jerusalem. They want the inworking of Christ's Spirit, James v. 16. the incense of Christ's intercession, and therefore cannot be accepted of the Father.

Mot. 2. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, the redemption purchased by Christ, till thou be united with him, Eph. ii. 12. It is not thine till it be applied to thee; and it is not applied but in the way of union with him. The ark, doubtless, could have saved more than it did; but what availed it to many that there was an ark, since they were not in it? Though there be a remedy that would cure thee, what does it avail thee, while it is not applied to thee?

Mot. 3. Miserable and dangerous beyond expression is thy state

while thou art not united to Christ, Eph. ii. 12. Poor soul, thou art sitting in the region and shadow of death, in the suburbs of hell. The wrath of God is hovering over thy head, though thou perceivest it not, John iii. ult. 'He that believeth not,—the wrath of God abideth on him.' Thou art secure but far from safety. The deluge of wrath is at hand, but thou hast no ark. The avenger of blood is at thy heels, and thou art not got into the city of refuge; the destroying angel is coming through, and thy door-posts are not sprinkled with blood yet; and fire and brimstone are ready to be rained down upon thee, but thou hast no Zoar to flee to.

Mot. ult. Christ offers to unite with you, Rev. iii. 20. even with the worst and vilest of you all. He sends out his ambassadors to gain your consent to this union, and win your hearts. Behold the former of all things making suit to his own clay, Matth. xxii. 4. 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage.' Will ye slight and despise this union, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life?

2. Labour to get the Spirit, who casts the inviolable knot. If ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye can be none of his.

3. *Lastly*, Believe. Christ and all his redemption are in your offer. Believe his word, embrace him in it, let your whole soul say amen to the blessed bargain. Consent to the gospel-offer, saying, Henceforth then he is mine, and I am his. Christ does not apprehend a soul by his Spirit, as a man takes a tree in his arms, but as one friend takes another, who mutually clasp one another. Do not delay this work; do not say, Ye dare not do it, since without it ye cannot be united to Christ.

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

2 Tim. i. 9.—*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*

The mystical union betwixt Christ and a sinner is brought to pass in the effectual calling of a sinner, which I come now to explain, and we have in the text. The apostle had exhorted Timothy to a confident adhering to the doctrine of the gospel, over the belly of afflictions for the cause of God; and in the text shews a good reason that both he himself and Timothy had to do so, taken from what God had done for them.

1. What the Lord had done for them. (1.) *Saved* them; namely, from sin and wrath; i. e. had brought them into a state of salvation out of a state of sin and misery, applied Christ's salvation to them, which is so effectual that never one dies of the disease after it is applied, and therefore may be said thereupon to be *saved*. (2.) *Called* them, namely, by his Spirit, when they were at a distance from him; he called them to himself, *saved* and *called*; not that he first saved, and then called them; but he saved them by calling them; which shews this call to be an effectual call. Therefore also it is called *an holy calling*, not only as proceeding from an holy God, but as making the called holy too.

2. The cause of the Lord's doing this for them. (1.) Negatively; not for any merit of theirs, they had done nothing to move God to call them more than others. (2.) Positively: [1.] His eternal purpose of love and salvation to them, as the apostle explains it, Rom. viii. 30. They were from eternity predestinated to salvation and the means of it, and therefore in complement of that purpose were savingly called. [2.] His grace or free favour given them in and through Jesus Christ, which is said to have been *given* them *before the world began*, from eternity; namely, virtually in the decree, which secured the real giving them it in time, as much as if they had it in hand. And this account of the causes of this call does further evince it to be effectual calling that is meant.

The doctrine of the text is,

Doct. 'All that partake of Christ's salvation are effectually called.'

Here I shall briefly explain to you the nature of effectual calling, and then apply it.

Effectual calling is the first entrance of a soul into the state of

grace, the first step by which God's eternal purpose of love descends unto sinners, and we again ascend towards the glory to which we are chosen. And upon the matter, it is the same with conversion and regeneration. I shall shew,

I. What the effectual call in the general is.

II. Who they are that are effectually called.

III. Whence and whither are they called that are effectually called.

IV. What makes the call effectual to some, when it is not so to others.

V. What is the necessity of their being thus effectually called.

VI. I shall more particularly explain the nature of effectual calling.

I. I am to shew what the effectual call in the general is. An effectual call is opposed to an ineffectual one. An effectual call is the call that gains its real intent; that is to say, when the party called comes when called. An ineffectual call is that which gains not the real intent of it, but falls short thereof, the party called not answering and obeying the call. To apply this to our purpose, all that hear the gospel are called; but,

1. To some of them it is ineffectual, and these are the most part of gospel-hearers, Matth. xx. 16. 'For many be called, but few chosen.' They are called, invited, and obtested to come to Christ; but it is but the singing of a song to a deaf man that is not moved with it, Prov. i. 24. The real intendment of the call is lost upon them. Though the intent of God the great caller can never be lost, who says, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,' Isa. xlvi. 10. yet the design of the thing is so. Though they are called, yet they come not to Christ, they sit his call, to their own destruction.

2. To others it is effectual, and these are but *few*, Matt. xx. 16. forecited. They get the call, and they rise and come away to Christ. It is not only the intent of the call, but of him that called them, to have them home to himself; and they receive not the grace of the gospel in vain. While others at best do but play about the bait, they greedily embrace it, and are catched according to that, 'Ye shall be fishers of men.' They come away like Lot out of Sodom, while others account the call in effect but a jest, and so abide and perish in the overthrow.

II. I come now to shew who they are that are thus effectually called. The text tells us, that this effectual call is according to God's purpose and free grace in Christ; and so it follows, that the elect, and they only are thus called, Rom. viii. 30. Acts xiii. 48.

Others may be outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit too, but are never effectually called. The bow is shot at a venture among the hearers of the gospel; but God, that knoweth who are his, directs the arrow, so as to make it hit right. O the riches and freedom of grace that appears in this! For,

1. It is men, and not fallen angels, that are called, though they should have been preferred, if God had respected the dignity of nature among his lost creatures. But 'the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,' Jude, 6. There is special love in that, 'Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men,' Prov. viii. 4. O may we not say, as Psal. viii. 4. 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

2. It is some men, and not others, that are called effectually, and these naturally in as bad and sinful a condition as others, Eph. ii. 12. 'At the time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.' They cannot pretend here, that they made the difference by their works; for says the text, *He saved us, and called us, not according to our works.* Nay, oft-times, they were worse than many others, such as fornicators, idolaters, &c. of whom Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Epist. vi. 11. says, 'Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' And says that apostle of himself, 1 Tim. i. 13. 'I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy.' Oft-times grace chuses to work on the most knotty piece of timber, which there is the least hope of.

3. *Lastly*, It is for the most part those who have the least advantages as to their outward condition in the world. For says the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. 'Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.' The Lord takes some of the greatest wits, of the greatest power, and the best blood in the world, but not many such. But often grace passeth by the learned man, and wise, and sits down and teaches babes in comparison with them. He passes by the rich, the

noble, and the gentle, and brings the meaner sort, the kinless things [*ta agene*], into a match with the Son of God, and an alliance with Heaven.

III. I proceed to shew whence and whither they are called who are effectually called. That I may answer this in a few words, observe, that there was a blessed bond of society betwixt God and his rational creatures, and among themselves, till sin entered, and then all was shaken loose. As it was at the building of Babel, so it was at the entrance of sin, there was a great scattering; sinners were separated from God, and from the holy angels, and scattered up and down on the mountains of vanity. For remedy of this, God appointed Jesus Christ the Head, in whom an elect world might meet again with God, and be gathered together among themselves, Eph. i. 10. 'That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' 1 Pet. ii. 25. 'For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.' So then they that are effectually called, are,

1. Called out of the world that lieth in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. And hence the *church* has its name in the prophetical and apostolical writings, *Ekklesia;* q. d. a company called out from among others, a gathered congregation. And so the gathering of them is made the great work of Jesus Christ, the Founder of the church, John xi. 52. The elect of God, in their natural condition, are lost sheep gone astray among the devil's goats; effectual calling is the bringing them from out among them, back to Christ's fold. They are the lost groat lying hid among the dust of the nasty house of this world; effectual calling is the taking them out from among that dust, and restoring them to the use for which they were designed.

Thus Christ bespeaks his spouse (for that work is still going on, and will be so, till they be quit of the world, soul and body, 1 Thess. v. 24.) 'Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house*.' Psal. xiv. 10. 'come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.' They are called away from the sinful and miserable state of the world, from their ways manners and work; in a word, out of their society, so that though they be in the world, they are no more of it,

* The author has some excellent sermons on these texts, not yet printed.

and therefore do they fare so ill in it, John xv. 19. Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

2. Called unto Jesus Christ, and through him to the blessed society of another world. So the call runs, Matth. xi. 28. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The society they are called and come to is that of God himself, the holy angels, all the saints in heaven and earth which have gone before them, Jesus Christ being the blessed bond of the society, the centre of union wherein they meet, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. 'Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Here the call is, 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage,' Matth. xxii. 4.

Thus they are, like Noah, called into the ark, where they will be safe when the deluge of wrath sweeps away the world of the ungodly. Like Lot, they are called unto Zoar, where they will be safe while fire and brimstone is rained on those that stay behind. They are called to the feast on the great sacrifice, Christ crucified, while others perish for want; to the partaking of the benefits of Christ's redemption, while others have neither part nor lot in that matter, but must fall a sacrifice for their own sins to avenging justice. The particulars they are called to, will serve them to tell through eternity.

IV. I proceed to shew what makes the call effectual to some, when it is not so to others. Negatively,

1. It is neither the piety, parts, nor seriousness of those who are employed to carry the gospel-call to sinners, 1 Cor. iii. 7. Indeed, if moral suasion were sufficient to bring sinners back to God, men that have the art of persuading, and can speak movingly and seriously could not fail to have vast numbers of converts. But that work is not so brought about, Luke xvi. ult. Hence said Abraham to the rich man in hell, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' Never did these, conjunctly or severally, appear in any, as in Christ, who 'spake as never man spake.' But behold the issue, John xii. 37, 38. 'But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, 'Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?'

2. Neither is it one that uses his own free-will better than another does, Rom. ix. 6. 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.' For every man will be unwilling till the power from another quarter make him willing, John vi. 44. If it were so, one man should make himself to differ from another in that grand point. But hear what the Apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'Who maketh thee to differ from another?' Men are dead in trespasses and sins, and such cannot difference themselves.

2. Positively. We may say in this case, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.' It is the Spirit of the Lord, accompanying the call of the word, that makes it effectual, John vi. 63. Hence days of the plentiful effusion of the Spirit are good days for the take of souls, and contrarywise, when the Spirit is restrained, Psal. cx. 3. Therefore Isaiah resolves the question thus, 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' The report may reach the ears, but it is the arm of the Lord that must open the heart, as it did that of Lydia. Mahomet II. the Turkish emperor, having desired to see Scanderbeg's scymitar, said, that he saw nothing in it more than ordinary; the other returned him answer, that the virtue of the weapon depended on the strength of his arm.

V. It may be asked, What necessity is there for their being thus called? The necessity of it is manifest to all that know their natural case.

1. They are far off, Eph. ii. 13. far from God, and Christ, and all good, Eph. ii. 12. Hence the call is, 'Draw nigh to God.' We are at a distance from him naturally; not a distance of place, for God is every where, Acts xvii. 27. but of opposition, as far from him as war from peace, black from white, and hell from heaven. Our nature is contrary to his, and our will to his will, Rom. viii. 7. And there is no bringing us to him but by a very powerful and effectual call, whereby the sinner is irresistibly drawn, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.'

2. They are hard and fast asleep, and they need this call, Eph. v. 14. 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' The ship they are in is every moment in hazard of being swallowed up of the waves, for the storm of wrath is gone out against it; but, like Jonah, they are down in the sides of the ship, know nothing of the matter to purpose, but are fast asleep. All their spiritual senses are locked up, they can neither see nor hear. Ministers cry, conscience cries, Awake thou sleeper, but to no purpose; if they be disturbed, they lay down

their heads again, and take yet a little sleep, a little slumber, though they should never awaken till they be in the bottom of the deep. And thus on they sleep, till the Spirit of the Lord call them effectually.

3. If they were awakened, they know not where to go to, Acts ii. 37. When they find the house on fire about their heads, they know not how to make their escape. The law-light that awakens them, cannot let them see Christ. He is preached and pointed out in the word, but they cannot take up the city of refuge, nor the way that leads to it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. until the Spirit of the Lord call them by his power, and they hear the voice behind them, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' Christ is a veiled Saviour to the natural man, till his eyes be opened.

4. If they did know where to go to, they are not willing to go thither, John v. 40. They are naturally unwilling to leave their lusts; all the milk and honey of the heavenly Canaan held forth in the gospel, cannot wean their hearts from the flesh-pots of Egypt. To leave a lust is like the cutting off of a right hand. And in this respect they need a powerful call, such a word from the Lord himself as makes the mountains to shake, the rocks to rend, and the graves to give up their dead, and the whale to vomit up Jonah. And particularly they are naturally unwilling to come to Christ, and will not be made willing in a day of power, Psal. cx. 3. When they are convinced of their disease, yet they cannot think to employ that Physician, or undergo his method of cure. Hence so many awakened sinners employ physicians of no value; they will go to the law that wounded them, they will watch, pray, mourn, and macerate their own bodies, rather than believe. For there is a peculiar enmity in man's nature against the gospel-way of salvation. So there is a necessity of an effectual call.

5. If they were willing to go to Christ, yet being awakened, they dare not venture, guilt so stares them in the face, Jer. ii. 25. 'Thou saidst, There is no hope.' While the man is asleep, it is nothing to him to believe, to come to Christ; like people that walk in their sleep, they can go any where fearlessly. But when he is awakened, it is not so easy. He will then be like Adam, hiding himself on hearing the voice of the Lord, and will not come till he be called by the Lord himself. Hence so many words of grace heaped on one another in gospel-invitations, Isa. lv. 7, 8, 9. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord. For as

the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' For the Lord knows, that however the sinner unawakened thinks coming to Christ a light thing, yet when once awakened, doubts and fears will be going as thick as dust in the sweeping of a dry floor.

6. *Lastly*, If they durst come, yet they cannot come, unless they be drawn, John vi. 44. forecited. Sinners naturally are not only asleep, but dead in sins. And no less power is requisite to bring them than to raise the dead, and therefore this call is a voice that raiseth the dead, John v. 25. The product of this call is a new creation, Eph. ii. 10, compare Rom. iv. 17.

VI. *Lastly*, I shall more particularly explain the nature of effectual calling. Ye see it is the work of the Lord's Spirit; and there is a twofold work of the Spirit upon the elect soul in effectual calling, one on the understanding, and the other on the will.

FIRST, On the understanding. This is the leading faculty of the soul, which by sin is overspread with darkness, Eph. v. 8. Satan finishes his work here, who, when he has got the soul asleep, shuts door and window, and draws the curtains, that the light may not enter, that so the soul may sleep the sleep of death; does as the Philistines did with Samson, puts out the sinner's eyes, when his strength is gone. And God begins his work here, as in the first creation, so in the second creation, 'The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light' Gen. i. 2, 3. Now, the work of the Spirit herein is twofold.

FIRST, An illumination of the soul from mount Sinai. And that is conviction of sin and misery, John xvi. 8. or the law-work. The Spirit of the Lord speaks to the soul as it were out of the midst of the fire; but there is blackness, darkness, and tempest, mixed with this light. And here consider the matter, the effects, the means, and the depth, of this conviction.

First, The matter of this conviction which is twofold.

1. Sin, John xvi. 8. 'He will reprove the world of sin.' The Spirit of the Lord convinces the man that he is a sinner, and sets his particular sins in order before him, Psal. l. 21. Then sins that are out of mind, as dead and buried, have a fearful resurrection, Rom. vii. 9. The spirit of bondage leads his prisoner in chains, through the several parts and steps of this life, to his very birth; and shews him convincingly his sins in them: lets him see such ill in sin as he never saw before, how heinously God takes it, and that with the several aggravations thereof.

2. Misery, John xvi. 8. The Spirit of the Lord convinces him, that he is lost and undone, Luke xv. 17. Being convicted and found guilty, sentence passes on him within his own breast, whereby he sees himself doomed to eternal death. He is convinced, as if an angel from heaven should tell him, that he is under God's wrath and curse, and that therefore, if he die in that case, he will perish for ever. He sees God to be his enemy; his word to speak no good of him, and all God's creatures his enemies in some sort ready armed against him.

Secondly, The effects of it are these three especially.

1. Remorse, Acts ii. 37. 'They were pricked in their hearts.' The man's conscience now galls him, and he is stung to the heart by the serpent which he hugged so kindly. Waves of killing grief and sorrow go over his soul, for his bypast folly and madness. He sees he has been murdering his own soul, and he groans out an elegy over his dead self.

2. Terror, Acts xvi. 27. as in the case of the Phillippian jailor. He sees now how he has to do with a holy just God, and how fearful a thing it is to fall into his hands. Horror takes hold on him, because of the judgments which he valued no more than the shadow of the mountains before. Then the stoutest sinner will quake at the shaking of a leaf, within his bosom, at the thought of death and eternity. A word from the Lord will pierce like a sword.

3. Anxiety, Acts ii. 37. The soul is then stretched on the rack, and would fain know if there be any hope. Sometimes it hopes, sometimes fears, but always would fain be delivered. This anxiety will fill head, and heart, and hand, and swallow up all other cares; for then the soul sees the truth of that saying, 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Mat. xvi. 26.

Thirdly, The means by which this conviction is wrought. The Spirit of the Lord makes use of the word for that effect, and particularly of the law. The elect soul is brought prisoner to Mount Sinai, and there the Spirit of the Lord reads a dreadful lecture of the fiery law unto it. And here,

1. By the commands, the Spirit convinces of sin, Rom. vii. 7. The law is held out in its spirituality, and it proves to be the candle of the Lord, searching the innermost parts of the belly; a looking glass, wherein one gets such a sight of himself as he never had before.

2. By the threatenings and curse of the law, the Spirit convinces of misery. There they read their doom, Gal. iii. 10. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the

book of the law to do them.' Then every command appears fenced with a curse, and so each of them writes death to the sinner. And thus the law exacting perfect conformity to it, and binding wrath and sin together, binds over the sinner to death.

Fourthly, The depth of this conviction. This conviction, or law-work, is not alike in all; but it is deep enough, and but enough, when,

1. The sinner is not only convinced of the sins of his life, lips, and heart, but also of the sin of his nature, Rom. vii. 14. He must be convinced of the corrupt disposition of his soul, whereby he is fitted for all evil, and unfit for any good; for if he see not where his sore lies, how can he apply the remedy to it? Therefore the Lord bids the people of Judah to 'break up their fallow ground, and sow not among thorns,' Jer. iv. 3. to carry down the plow to the root of their corruptions, which is the sin of our nature. It was the ruin of the stony ground, that there was no depth of the earth. And it is the ruin of many who are convinced, that they never get a true sight of their own sinful nature; and thus their case turns to be like that of a boil, not sufficiently lanced, it is scurfed over a while, but never healed.

2. When the sinner is convinced of his absolute need of Christ, and of all his salvation, John xvi. 8. It is for this end that the Spirit works this work on the elect. Sinners will not come to Christ as long as they can find any other way; and therefore the Spirit hunts the elect out of all their starting holes, that finding no rest for the soles of their feet, they may get into the ark.

Therefore they must be convinced that they cannot want him; that they are utterly undone, if they get not an interest in him. And they must see their need of his sanctifying Spirit, as well as his justifying blood; that they must be saved by him from sin, as well as from wrath. They must see their utter inability to take away their guilt by all their mourning, reformation, &c. and that they can as little mortify a lust as take away guilt.

Inf. 1. How hopeless is the case of many that have never yet been awakened by the Spirit of conviction! The forerunners of the effectual call are not yet come unto you.

2. What a madness is it to work against and stave off convictions, or to murder them when they have once entered! These sinners against their own souls, wrestle against their own salvation.

Secondly, The work of the Spirit in effectual calling, is an illumination of the soul from Mount Zion. It is the enlightening in the knowledge of Christ, Acts xxvi. 18. It is the finding of the pearl spoken of, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. It is the discovery of the Physician to

the soul anxious for spiritual life and health. And this is a refreshing illumination, like the appearance of the rising sun after a long black and dark night, Hos. vi. 3. And here let us consider the matter, the effect, the means, and the measure, of this illumination.

First, The matter of this illumination is twofold.

1. Christ's ability to save. The man is made to see that Christ is able to save him, and that however desperate his condition be, he can cure him, Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him.' The eyes that were held before that they could not perceive him, discover now his glorious suitableness to their case. They see him in the glory of his person and natures, and his offices; a fulness in him, of merit for their justification, and of Spirit for their sanctification.

2. His willingness to save. The man is made to see that Christ is willing to save him, John vi. 37. 'Him that cometh to me, (says the Lord Jesus), I will in nowise cast out.' He sees that there is hope in Israel concerning his salvation in particular; that however his sins be many and great, yet he is not excluded from the benefit of the indemnity proclaimed and offered in the gospel. He discovers the Saviour stretching out his arms to embrace him, and calling him to partake of the benefits of his purchase.

Secondly, The effect of this illumination is hope. As the wise merchant hoping to be the owner of the pearl, sets himself to it, Matth. xiii. 46. The soul then begins to lift up its head, and says, 'Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?' Joel. ii. 14.; and with Jonah in the whale's belly, 'Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple,' Jonah ii. 4. And this is a blessed anchor of the soul that is yet in the depths, and has not got ashore, and keeps it from despondency.

Thirdly, The means by which it is wrought. That is the glorious gospel in the hand of the Spirit, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. For Christ is the subject of it, Eph. iii. 8. The law discovers the disease, and the gospel the physician. The one is effected by the thunder of a broken law, and the other by the still small voice of the gospel. And herewith begins the healing of the wounded soul.

Fourthly, The measure of it. The clearer this light be, it is so much the better. The more fully one be persuaded of Christ's ability and willingness to save, the more quick and thorough will his deliverance from all his fears be. But it is more or less, and not of one degree, in all. But so much of it is necessary as may make the soul venture itself on Christ, Mark ix. 24. And even this is very acceptable in the sight of the Lord, as the fruit of his own Spirit, Cant. vi. 10.

SECONDLY, The second work of the Spirit in effectual calling is on the will of the sinner. This faculty of the soul needs also a saving work of the Spirit thereon, being fearfully depraved in the state of nature, Rom. viii. 7. Effectual calling is the Lord's opening of the heart, as Lydia's; as the call of the gospel is, to open to him, Rev. iii. 20. There is a twofold door opened in effectual calling. (1.) The outer door of the understanding. That is opened by the twofold illumination spoken of before. And that door may at least be half-opened, as blown up by a law-storm of conviction, and yet the soul be not effectually called. (2.) The inner door of the will; and when that is opened, the work is done, Christ and the sinner meet. It is the great work. Now, the Spirit's work on the will is,

The renewing of it, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. The Spirit of the Lord takes away the old and obstinate will of the sinner, which was an iron sinew in his neck, that would never bow to him; and gives him a new will, renewing him in the Spirit of his mind. Sin gave all the faculties of the soul a wrong set, particularly the will, which was originally bent in conformity to the will of God; but in the state of nature is bent the quite contrary way, Rom. viii. 7. The Spirit of the Lord in effectual calling brings it back in some measure to its primitive constitution.

This renovation does not change the soul in its substance but in the qualities thereof. It is the endowing of the will with new qualities, removing and breaking the power of the old ones, Eph. iv. 23, 24. planting in it new dispensations and inclinations. These are chiefly two:

1. Flexibleness or pliableness to good, Ezek. xxxvi. 20. 'I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' The stony heart is inflexible; it will break but not bow. But grace makes it a heart of flesh, that will bow according to the will of God. It powerfully melts it down, like wax before the fire; and makes it capable of impressions of holiness, Acts ix. 6. 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' content to be made holy, to be made clean, to come into the Physician's hand; willing to part with sin. The natural contumacy, wilfulness, and refractoriness, is carried off; the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke is tamed, and is taught to stand and receive it.

2. A proneness and bent of the will to good, Jer. xxxi. 18. The natural aversion is conquered, and the will that bent to the wrong side, by a powerful touch of the hand of the sanctifying Spirit, gets a set the contrary way, and is bowed or inclined to the will of God. This David prays for, for himself, Psal. cxix. 36. 'In-

cline my heart unto thy testimonies;' and the apostle, for the Thessalonians, 2 Epist. iii. 5. 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.' The Holy Ghost working like fire, softens the iron heart, and then bends it according to his will, Psal. cx. 3. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.'

If any ask, how this is done? let them take their answer from Eccl. xi. 5. 'Thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all, John iii. 8. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.' The works of God in nature are often beyond our reach to account for the way of them, and no wonder his work of grace is so. The effect is felt, the change is visible; but how the Spirit worketh it, who can distinctly trace that? This we are sure of, it is done in a way agreeable to the rational nature; there is no force or compulsion in the case; but he that made the heart, makes it willing, and sweetly, yet powerfully conquers it, Psal. cx. 3.

Thus ye have heard that the work of the Spirit is twofold on the elect soul in effectual calling. It remains that,

Lastly, I shew you the blessed effect and happy issue of this twofold work of the Spirit on the elect soul. It is, that the sinner is persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel. And thus the call is effectual. Here we may consider,

1. The effectual closing with the call. That is the sinner's embracing Christ by faith, John i. 12. The call of the gospel comes to poor sinners, saying, as Jer. iii. 22. 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings: and when it is effectual, the soul echoes back to the call, 'Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. The heart is won to Christ, the sinner is conquered, says Amen to the covenant, and gives its consent to Christ, to take him in the offer of the gospel. It comes out of itself, renounces its own wisdom, and takes Christ for a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, for all, and instead of all. This is the great design of the call; and whatever length one come, he never answers the call, till he come this length. Though people may come the length of mourning for sin, and reformation of life in duties, if they do not embrace Christ in the gospel-offer, they stick in the place of breaking forth.

2. The warrant the sinner has to embrace Christ. That is the gospel-offer, Prov. viii. 4. 'Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men.' It would be presumption indeed for guilty creatures to embrace Christ, if he were not offered unto them. That is a match which is so high above us, that we could have no hopes of it, unless it were offered to us. But we are bidden to this mar-

riage, Matth. xxii. 4. We are commanded to believe on him, John iii. 23. and that on our highest peril, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth not, shall be damned.' And do what we will, we cannot please God, if we do not that, Heb. xi. 6, 'For without faith it is impossible to please him:' for that is what the Lord mainly requires of us, John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.'

4. How the elect soul is effectually determined to it. The Spirit of the Lord persuades him to it, John vi. 45. Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.' The soul has a bosom-counsellor, that leaves it not till it be won over to give consent to the happy match. The sinner may stand long in suspense, doubting whether to embrace the call or not, and Satan, with the corrupt heart, will muster up all the objections they can against it. But the Spirit of the Lord clears all their objections to the soul, so far as they cannot get them sustained, and presses and urges the sinner unanswerably to comply.

And this the Spirit does by the twofold illumination spoken of before. Upon the one hand, the sinner is pressed with his lost and undone state. He sees that he is undone for ever, if he does not comply. On the other, he is pressed with the sight of Christ's ability and willingness to save, and the prospect of perfect happiness upon his compliance. So that he sees all the reason in the world for answering the call.

This shews that the Spirit acts in the conversion of a soul in a way suitable to the rational nature. What stronger arguments are possible than what are here made use of? and how can they fail to determine when the Spirit of the Lord, by his gracious work, sets them home on the soul? Can there be any thing more powerful to determine the slayer to run, than to see the avenger of blood hard behind him, and the city of refuge at hand before him? And so it is in this case.

Lastly, How the sinner is helped to comply with the call. The Spirit of the Lord enables him, Eph. i. 19, 20. This is absolutely necessary, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me draw him.' In vain will we call the lame man to run for his life, for, alas! he cannot do it; or the dead to arise, for they cannot move. But the Lord with the call sends forth a power enabling them to answer it, as in the case of Lazarus, Phil. ii. 13. 'For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' The soul gets life from the Spirit of life, feet to run to Christ, and hands to receive him, even the faith that is of the operation of God. And so the work is completed.

This is done by the renewing of the will in a special manner. The soul being made pliable, actually complies; and having got the new disposition, acts accordingly, embracing and uniting with Jesus Christ.

I proceed now to the application of this subject.

Use I. Of information. This lets us see,

1. The happiness of those that are effectually called; they are partakers of Christ's salvation. He and his redemption are theirs. Their particular privileges will afterwards occur. In the general,

(1.) Whatever they meet with in the world, it shall turn to their good, Rom. viii. 28. Their crosses shall not be curses, but their curses be turned into blessings. The teeth-winds they meet with shall blow them towards their harbour, and every stone cast at them shall be turned into a precious stone. They shall be gainers by all, and losers by nothing at length. For that eternal purpose by which they are called, has ordered all things for their good.

(2.) They shall surely be safe for ever: 'For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,' Rom. ix. 29.

They are brought out from among the perishing multitude, and they shall never fall back again. Of the society they are called into, none can be lost. God will perfect the work which he has begun; and they that are brought upon this first step of the ladder, shall go from one step to another, till they come into the hill of God.

2. The misery of those who are not effectually called. They are not partakers of Christ's redemption. We all have the external call of the gospel; but, alas! how few of the called do come in upon the call? O, Sirs, see how ye entertain the gospel-call, your all depends on it for salvation or damnation. While ye do not comply with it, ye are in a lost state, a state of sin and wrath; yea, if ye do not comply with it, it will be worse for you than if ye had never heard the gospel-call, Prov. i. 24. I shall here, for the conviction of sinners, lay down some evidences of the gospel-call not being effectual to them.

(1.) They that never felt a divine power coming with the word into their hearts, are not effectually called, Isa. liii. 1. Psal. cx. 3. Think on this, ye that have still sat unmoved under the dropping of the gospel, into whose ears the word comes; but as I may say, it never sinks into your hearts. Ye have never heard the Lord's voice, and therefore are still in your sin.

(2.) They that never had any abiding impression made by the word on their spirits. Many are like the stony ground on whom the word makes some impression, while they hear or read it, but

presently it goes away, Matth. xiii. 6. They are like the sieve in the water, full, but immediately lose all again. Be sure, if ever the Spirit of God deal effectually with you, he will make an impression on you that will abide. Ye will carry it home with you, and it will remain, till it make you change your way and course, and make you new creatures.

(3.) They that are still with the world lying in wickedness; the old men and women they were before, no change, no reformation with them, by all the calls of the gospel, sounding in their ears, 1 John v. 19. If ever ye comply with the call, ye will come out, and leave that way and that society. Such are all profane persons, grossly ignorant of the truths of God, prayerless persons, and generally all that are not truly godly. O how easily may most be known to be of the world! Are there not many whose speech bewrays them? they speak the language of the world, they know not that of Canaan. They keep the way of the world; they are conformed to it, in sinful scandalous practices. They drive worldly designs as the main design they have in hand. The constant language of their practice is, 'Who will shew us any good,' any worldly or temporal good? They go with ease the way of the multitude.

(4.) They that have never been under convictions of their sinful and lost state. This is the first work of the Spirit in effectual calling. What think ye of yourselves then, who have lived at ease all your days, whose rest has never been disturbed with the thoughts of what shall become of your immortal souls at death? Luke xi. 21. Have ye never seen yourselves lost and undone under the wrath of God? If so, it is an evidence, that it lies upon you still. If ye have never seen yourselves children of the devil, it is a sure token that ye are not yet the children of God.

(5.) Those whose convictions have never gone deep enough, Matth. xiii. 6. Many have got the sluggard's awakening, who have been disturbed in their spiritual sleep, but never thoroughly awakened, and therefore they have just fallen asleep again. They have been frightened under the guilt of gross sins, but never saw the evil of vain thoughts, idle words, &c. like children that are very easy playing with the dust, as long as it gets not into their eyes. If they have got a frightful sight of their actual sins, yet they never had the sin of their nature spread out before them. They have not been convinced of their need of Christ's Spirit for their sanctification, as well as of his blood for their justification.

(6.) Those who have stifled their convictions, warred against an awakened conscience, and come off victorious. Many take ways and means to quench the Spirit, which prevail to their own ruin; a

plain evidence that they are strangers to the efficacious irresistible operations of the Spirit in effectual calling. Some get their convictions laid by delays and off-puts, as Felix did, Acts xxiv. 25. Some for that end fill their heads and hands with business, like Cain building cities. Some with carnal mirth divert them, or, by rushing on to more sin over the belly of their consciences, do choke them, till they become as seared with a hot iron. O horrid cruelty against the soul! to refuse to be healed!

(7.) Those who have never had any special illumination in the knowledge of Christ. It is certain, that hypocrites may be enlightened both in the knowledge of the law and of the gospel, Heb. vi. 4; but there is a saving illumination in effectual calling that is peculiar to them called, John iv. 10. Psal. ix. 10. In that work there is such a discovery made of Christ in his ability and willingness to save, as shews him to be so suitable to the sinner's case, so transcendently excellent, as that the soul is determined to embrace him for all, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. It sinks the value of all created things, and makes sinful lusts to appear as husks for swine, in comparison of the bread of life.

(8.) Those who, whatever light they have got, yet there has been no heat with it, to melt down the heart and will into a pliableness to the will of God, and the call of the gospel, Job xxiv. 13. Many come a great length in light, by the common operations of the Spirit, from whom the stony heart is never taken away, nor the power of it broken. Such was the case of Balaam, in whom the heart enmity against God and holiness is still rampant, as appears from the history of him. Such also was the case of those mentioned, Heb. vi. 4. &c. The outer door is broken up by the force of a law-storm, and some common touches of the Spirit on their minds; but the inner door remains still shut. The outworks are taken, but the fort of the heart remains impregnable. Some one lust or other still has the throne in the heart.

(9.) *Lastly*, Those whose exercises have never issued in a kindly closing with Christ in the gospel-offer. O! it is lamentable to think how many a good work that seems once fairly begun is miserably marred. Some are still kept wavering and undetermined, halting betwixt God and Baal, light pressing them forward, love to their lusts drawing them back, so that their time is like to go ere they come to a resolution what to do. Some, instead of closing with Christ, close with duties; but never come out of themselves to Christ, but like the spider, entangled in her own web, perish. But true believers 'rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,' Phil. iii. 3. Some close with Christ for jus-

tification, but never mind or see a need to close with him for sanctification.

Use II. Of exhortation. Come away from the world lying in wickedness, unto Jesus Christ, and so comply with the gospel-call. Come away, sinners, unto him. For motives,

1. Consider what a society ye are called to come out of. See their character, Eph. ii. 12. Those that are 'without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.' We are all natives of that society indeed; but it is a Godless, Christless society, which we have need to leave, and that timeously.

(1.) It is a sinful society, a corrupt, unclean one, where there is nothing pure, Tit. i. 15. Better lie in a kennel with dogs, or in a hog-sty with swine, than with the world in wickedness. Their souls are like Job's body, boils and sores all over, that they have not a free finger to scrape themselves withal. The society of the unconverted are defiled in all their faculties, and so they can do nothing that is good and acceptable in God's sight. Their thoughts are polluted with vanity or vileness, their words are abominable, for their throat is like an open sepulchre; their actions, their very civil actions, are sinful, Prov. xxi. 4.; and their religious ones are so too, Prov. xv. 8.

(2.) It is a most miserable society, Rev. iii. 17. O the wretched state of the unconverted world! what tongue can tell their misery, who are without Christ, and without God in the world. They are the butt of God's indignation, and set for a mark to the arrows of his wrath, Psal. vii. 12, 13. They are those that are under God's curse; their state is a prison, out of which those that die in it are carried to the prison of hell: and there is no more difference betwixt them and the damned, than betwixt a dry faggot lying before the fire ready to be cast in, and the faggot that is in it already. A black cloud of wrath hangs over their heads at all times, ready to break upon them, John iii. 36.

How can it be otherwise, since it is a society which Satan is the head of, 2 Cor. iv. 4. ruled and governed by him, and with whom those that die in it must lodge for evêr?

Now, sinners, have ye not been long enough there already? May I not say, as Deut. i. 6. 'Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount.' O come away from Lebanon! Cant. iv. 8. Leave the world of the ungodly, that are to be swept away with the flood of wrath, and come into the ark. Turn your back on that Sodom, which is to be overthrown in its own filthiness; haste and flee for your life; there is a Zoar to flee into, where ye may be safe.

2. Consider what a society ye are called to. This calling is a high calling, Phil. iii. 14. It is a holy and happy society. All the saints, the excellent ones of the earth, are of it, the glorified saints, the holy angels, and God in Christ is the head of it, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. O refuse not that high calling!

If ye will come away, ye shall enjoy the privileges of this society as members thereof, Eph. ii. 19. Ye shall be inheritors of glory, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: not only saved from wrath, but made happy here in the favour of God, and completely blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

3. *Lastly*, Consider who calleth you. It is the voice of a man that ye hear, but the word of the call is the Lord's own word: and therefore I say, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh,' Heb. xii. 25. Our Lord Jesus has got the grant of the kingdom from the Father; and he minds to raise it up on the ruins of Satan's kingdom. And therefore he comes to the world lying in wickedness, to call out from among them whom he may make partakers of his glory. And therefore I say unto you, 'Arise, for the Master calleth you.' And since it is so, it is evident,

(1.) Ye may come; there is an open door for you, none of you all are excluded, Isa. lv. 1. The fallen angels have not that privilege, and therefore they grudge ye should have it; and they will do what they can to keep you from the benefit of it.

(2.) Ye shall not be rejected, nor get the door cast in your teeth, John vi. 37. Your being called ensures your welcome. Let not unbelief suggest such jealousies, as that it is needless to come now, for we will not be accepted; for the market of free grace is not yet over, and as long as the call is given you, ye may be sure of welcome. Indeed the day will come, that Christ will cease to call you; and then it will be needless to think of coming: but O come while the door is open! 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are,' Luke xiii. 24, 25.

(3.) *Lastly*, If ye do not come, it is upon your peril, the peril of the Mediator's vengeance. Does he call you, and will ye not come? Nay, you must come under the pain of the King's highest displeasure, Mat. xxii. 7.

As for you that are called, see that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, being holy in all manner of life and conversation.

OF THE BENEFITS OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

ROM. viii. 30.—*Whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

IN this and the preceding verse is the golden chain of salvation, consisting of five links. The first two lie out of the sinner's view, till they be brought to light by means of the third. The first is God's foreknowledge, or eternal free-love and favour to some of mankind, laid on them from everlasting. The second is the predestination of these, electing them to everlasting life, and the means leading thereto. The third is the calling of the predestinated, calling them effectually, which is done in time, of which we have spoke before: There are other two that hang upon this. The fourth is the justification of the called which may imply the whole of the relative change made upon them, both their justification and adoption; for it is evident from verse 29. that the apostle has respect to adoption in this chain. The fifth is the glorifying of the justified, which may import the whole of the real change made on the elect, namely, the sanctifying of them here, and glorifying of them hereafter. For what is grace but glory in the bud, and glory but grace brought to perfection? and therefore believers, 'with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image frome glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus effectual calling, as it rises from eternal love, so it makes the soul happy here and hereafter.

The text affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'They that are effectually called do thereby partake of great and glorious benefits and privileges, both in this life and the life to come.'

Here I shall briefly shew,

I. What are those benefits which they who are effectually called partake of in this life.

II. The benefits they partake of in the life to come.

III. Apply.

I. I shall shew what are those benefits which they that are effectually called partake of in this life.

First, There are three leading benefits which they partake of here.

1. They are all justified. So says the text. As soon as ever the soul answers the call of the gospel, and comes to Christ, the man is brought out of a state of condemnation, and gets his absolviture, Rom. viii. 1. He lives not a moment longer under the black cloud

of the curse, but is translated into another climate, where he lives under the sunshine of the blessing. His sins are all pardoned, and he is accepted as a righteous man. He is judged, and he gets the white stone, Rev. ii. 17. The law and justice have no more to demand of him; the cords of guilt are loosed and thrown away, and he is clothed with a perfect righteousness.

2. They are all adopted children of God, Eph. i. 5. They get not only the white stone, but the new name, the name of sons and daughters to God. They are brought out of the devil's family, and made members of the household of faith: not servants only, but sons. For the moment they answer the call, new blood runs in their veins; they are of the blood-royal of heaven; Christ's Father is their Father, he is their elder brother; and the Spirit of his Son dwells in them, teaching them to cry, Abba, Father. They are of the same household with the excellent of the earth: All ye are brethren; nay, with the saints and angels in heaven; for though the one dwell above, and the other below, they are all but one family, Eph. iii. 15.

3. They are all sanctified, 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Thess. iv. 7. It is a holy calling, 2 Tim. i. 9. The author of it is holy, the means are holy, and the end and effect of it must needs be holy. As soon as the sinner answers the call, the Spirit of sanctification goes on with the begun work in him, breaks the reigning power of sin, gives it a deadly blow, so that it shall never recover, but languish on, till it quite die out. He adorns him with all saving graces, conforming the sinner to the image of Christ, John i. 16; so that he begins to lead a new life, living to the Lord and his service. The call brings him, like Lazarus, out of the congregation of the dead, and then the remainder of his life is spent in putting off the grave-cloths of sin, and acting from a principle of spiritual life.

Secondly, There are other benefits which accompany or flow from these. For these come not alone, but each of them is the opening of a treasure to the called, the striking up of a fountain, that runs out in many streams, Eph. i. 3. Some of these are mentioned in that question, 'What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?' *Ans.* —'Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.' But who can reckon up all these benefits? For 'all things are theirs; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs,' 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. I shall only at present single out the following.

1. Reconciliation with God, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith,

we have peace with God.' When the sinner is effectually called, the real enmity is taken away, and the legal enmity is removed by justification. God and the sinner become friends, and are firmly so in a covenant of peace, having common friends and enemies. Sin being removed and pardoned, the peace follows of course. The war is ended; for the treaty of peace proposed by the ambassadors of peace is complied with. But of this I spoke when treating of Christ's priestly office.

2. Access to God, as children to a Father, Eph. iii. 12. as one friend to another. The war being ended, and peace concluded, the communication betwixt heaven and earth is opened. They may export thither all their wants, petitions, and requests, being sure that they will be taken off their hands; and import supplies of all kinds necessary, to make them happy, light, life, strength, &c.

3. Freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan, John viii. 32. They that are sanctified by the Spirit, are loosed from the Egyptian bondage, and made the Lord's free-men. Though Satan and sin molest them, and put them hard to it, they shall never get them back again into their former house of bondage. But they shall, like a dog snarling at the horses heels, be bruised under their feet at length; and the soul shall be more than conqueror.

4. *Lastly*, A right to eternal life, Rom. viii. 17. Acts xx. 32. They may claim it in their head Christ, and their title is good and sure in him; for it is a heavenly calling, whereby they are called to the eternal inheritance. And therefore says the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 1. 'We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

II. I shall shew what benefits they that are effectually called partake of in the life to come. The advantages of effectual calling are great in this life, but they do not stop there, when a man must leave all temporal benefits, which he enjoys any manner of way here in this world, he will enter to the full enjoyment of the benefits coming by his answering the gospel-call. These are comprehended in one word, glorification, which will fall in afterwards to be treated of. In a word, at death the converted soul is received into heaven; at the last day his body will be gloriously raised, and both soul and body made perfectly happy for ever, 2 Thess. ii. 14.

I come now to make some practical improvement of this subject.

Use I. Of information. This doctrine lets us see,

1. That the gospel is the best news that ever was heard in the world, and the most excellent offer that ever was made to poor sinners, Eph. iii. 8. There are many to court the soul; Satan makes

his offers, the world its offers, and sin has its offers too. But all that they offer will not tell far, it perishes in the using, at most it cannot reach beyond this life. But Christ's offer in the gospel is of the best of things here, and the best of all hereafter, that we may enter to the enjoyment of, when nothing remains but the bitter dregs of the offers of sin, Satan, and the world.

2. God deals very liberally and kindly with his people that answer his call. He does not put an empty spoon into their mouths, he sets them not down to bare commons; they get much in hand, and yet far more in hope, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Their present possessions are far more valuable than crowns and sceptres in the world; but what they have a title to, is what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive. And then all is firm and sure; they can never be shaken out of their privileges, Rom. xi. 29. Heb. xii. 28.

3. Whatever men lose by complying with and following the gospel-call, they are gainers, Phil. iii. 8. He was a wise merchant that sold all to buy the pearl of great price. They are wise indeed that are wise for their souls; and they are so that come to Christ on his call; while all the neglectors of the great salvation, gain what they will otherwise, do lose a talent while they gain a mite, losing their own souls, which loss can never be made up.

USE II. Of exhortation.

First, To unconverted sinners. O comply with the gospel-call at length, and come away to Christ. I offer a few motives to press the exhortation.

Mot. 1. While ye do not come away upon the call, ye have no part or lot in these benefits. If ye presume to apply them to yourselves, God's word knocks off your fingers from them, for they are the peculiar privilege of those that are effectually called. And,

1. Ye are not justified, the sentence of condemnation is standing in force against you, Gal. iii. 10. John iii. ult. And as sure as God's word cannot fail, it will be executed, if ye come not in in time. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse; all that thou dost is sin. But not one of all thy sins is pardoned; they are all wreathed about thy neck, and thou hast them all to reckon for. And thou hast not a cautioner to go between justice and thee; the burden must lie on thy own back.

2. Ye are none of God's children, but of the devil's, John viii. 44. Ye are still of the family ye were born of. A sad family, against which God will have war for ever. Ye can have no access to God, nor communion with him, nor may any of the privileges of the children of God be claimed by you. Your inheritance is suitable to the

family ye are of, namely, that ye are children of wrath, and heirs of hell.

3. Ye are not sanctified. There is no sanctification without the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you; ye have not Christ's Spirit, for ye are none of his. A form of godliness ye may have, but the power of it ye are strangers to. Ye are Satan's drudges and sin's slaves, though all are not employed in alike coarse work by the master of that family, Eph. ii. 2, 3.

Mot. 2. If ye will come to Christ on his call, ye shall partake of all these benefits. If your sins were never so great and many, they shall be pardoned, Isa. lv. 7. Ye shall be the children of God through Jesus Christ, John i. 12. Ye shall be made holy, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Come in under the covert of his blood, and then neither law nor justice shall reach you. Match with the Son of God, and ye shall be of his Father's family. Answer his call, and he will break the yoke from off your necks, and make you free.

O, Sirs, do not ye need this benefits? How will ye live without them? are ye able to bear the weight of unpardoned guilt? How will ye die without them? What will it be to die in an unpardoned state, strangers to the family of heaven, and still in your sins? May not these glorious privileges prevail with you? Do ye think nothing of the white stone and new name, which ye may get by coming to Christ? Seemeth it a light thing to you to be adopted into the family of the King of heaven, and to have his image drawn on you? Think with yourselves how it will aggravate your condemnation, that Christ and all his salvation was in your offer, and ye would have none of him, Heb. ii. 3.

Secondly, To converted sinners that have answered the call.

1. Labour to know your great privileges for time and eternity, 2 Pet. i. 10. O! it is a sad matter that the people of God should have so little knowledge of their state. This would be a notable means to promote sanctification, and tenderness in heart and life.

2. Be thankful for these privileges. Bless God for Christ and the gospel. O bless him for his holy and powerful Spirit. Admire and adore his rich grace, bestowed on worthless worms through Christ, 1 John iii. 1.

3. *Lastly*, Walk worthy of the vocation, and suitable to the privileges of it, that is, humbly, holily, heavenly, contentedly patiently, and cheerfully, in hopes of the glory that is to be revealed.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

ROMANS iii. 24.—*Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

THE first of those benefits which the called do partake of is justification, which is the great relative change made upon them, bringing them out of the state of condemnation, wherein they are born, and live till they come to Christ. In the text we have,

1. The persons justified, sinners, viz. believing in Christ. It is the justification of a sinner that the apostle speaks of, as is implied in the connection, ver. 23, 24. 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: *being justified freely by his grace;* but believing, ver. 26.—the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

2. The party justifying, God the judge of all, his grace. It is God's act to justify a sinner.

3. The manner and moving cause, *freely by his grace.* It is done freely, without any thing of ours done by us to procure or merit it; and it flows from God's grace or free favour to undeserving and ill deserving creatures.

4. The material and meritorious cause, *the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* He has paid the price and ransom whereby the sinner is set free.

The text affords this great and important doctrinal note, viz.

DOCT. 'The justification of a sinner before God is of free grace, through the satisfaction of Christ.

In discoursing from this subject I shall shew,

I. What it is to justify a sinner, in general, in the scriptural sense.

II. What are the parts of justification.

III. The cause of our justification.

IV. Apply the subject.

1. I shall shew what it is to justify a sinner, in general, in the scripture-sense. Justification and sanctification are indeed inseparable. In vain do they pretend to be justified who are not sanctified; and in vain do they fear they are not justified, who are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 11. But yet they are distinct benefits, not to be confounded, nor taken for one and the same.

Justification is not the making of a person just and righteous, by infusing grace or holiness unto him. But it is a discharging him from guilt, and declaring or pronouncing him righteous. So it is a law-term taken from courts of judicature, wherein a person is ac-

cused, tried, and after trial absolved. Thus the scripture opposeth it to accusation and condemnation, Rom. viii. 33, 34. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,' Deut. xxv. 1. 'They shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.' And so it is declared to be a sin to justify the wicked, Prov. xvii. 15. not to make them righteous, but to pronounce them righteous. Hence it follows, that,

1. Justification is not a real change of the sinner's nature, but a relative change of his state. The change of the sinner's nature, from sin to holiness, is inseparably annexed to it: but it is only the bringing him out of the state of condemnation, and setting him beyond the reach of the law, as a righteous person, which is an unspeakable benefit.

2. Justification is an act done and passed in an instant in the court of heaven, as soon as the sinner believes in Christ; and not a work carried on by degrees. For if a sinner be not perfectly justified, he is not justified at all. If a man were accused of ten capital crimes, if one of them be fixed upon him, he is condemned, and must die. And hence also, though one may be more sanctified than another, yet no believer is in the sight of God more justified than another, since the state of justification is not capable of degrees.

II. I proceed to shew what are the parts of justification.

These are two, the pardoning of sin, and the accepting of the sinner's person as righteous. This double benefit is conferred on the sinner in justification. That we may the more clearly take up this matter, we must view the process of a sinner's justification. And here,

First, God himself sits Judge in this process, Psal. ix. 4. 'Thou sattest in the throne judging right.' He gave the law; and as he is the Lawgiver, so he is the Judge of all the earth. Men may justify themselves, Luke x. 29. and others may justify them: but what does it avail, if God do not justify them? for only he has the authority and power to do it, Rom. viii. 33. 'It is God that justifieth.' Many a man looking overly into his own state and case, passes a very favourable sentence on himself, and his way may be so blameless before the world, that others must judge him a righteous man too; but the judgment of God comes after, and reverses all. And he only can justify authoritatively and irreversibly. For,

1. He only is the Lawgiver, and he only has power to save or to destroy, and therefore the judgment must be left to him, Jam. iv. 12. The case concerns his honour and law, and must be tried at his

tribunal; and whoever takes it in hand, he will call it to his own bar.

2. To him the debt is owing, and therefore he only can give the discharge. Against him the crime is committed, and he only can pardon it. Accept us as righteous who will, if he do it not, who gave the law of righteousness, it is nothing, Mark ii. 7.

Secondly, The sinner is cited to answer before God's judgment-seat, by the messengers of God, the ministers of the gospel, Mal. iii. 1. Every sermon an unconverted sinner hears, is a summons put into his hand to answer for his living in a state and course of sin. He is told he has broken God's law, and he must go to God and see what he will answer, and what course he will take with his debt. But, alas! for the most part sinners are so secure, that they sit the summons, slight it, and will not appear.

But that is not all. Some keep themselves out of the messenger's way; either they will not come at all, or very seldom to the public assemblies where the summons is given, Heb. x. 25. But the leaving of the summons there will hold in law before him that sends them, and the dust of the messenger's feet will be sufficient witness to the execution, Matt. x. 14. Some never read the summons, they never once seriously consider or apply to themselves the word preached. They hear it as if they heard it not, it never sinks into their hearts. Others tear the summons in pieces; their hearts, like Ahab in the case of Micaiah, rise against the word and the bearer of it, and they hate both, as speaking no good of them. Some affront the messengers, and sometimes lay violent hands on them, Matth. xxii. 6. And thus some sit the summons all their days, and never appear till death bring them under his black rod, before the tribunal in another world, where there is no access to justification or pardon. But God suffers none of his elect to do so always.

Thirdly, The Lord the Judge sends out other messengers, and they apprehend the sinner, lay hands on him to carry him, whether he will or not, before the judgment-seat, and oblige him to abide his trial. And these are two, the Spirit of bondage, and an awakened conscience, John xvi. 8, 9. Prov. xx. 27. These will catch the man, and hunt him till they find him out, when they have got their order, Jer. ii. 27. They apprehended Paul when going to Damascus, and left him not till he appeared, and submitted himself.

But it is not always so. Some that are apprehended get out of the messenger's hands, and make their escape unhappily. When they are catched, they are unruly prisoners, they struggle and wrestle, and strive against the Spirit, and their own consciences, Acts vii. 51. they go no farther with them than they are dragged

They get the mastery at length over their conscience, break its bonds, and stifle its convictions, and so grieve and quench the Spirit, that they get away to their own ruin; like Cain, Saul, Felix, &c. But none of God's elect ever get away altogether.

Fourthly, Then the elect soul is infallibly sisted at length before the judgment-seat. The Spirit of bondage and the awakened conscience apprehend him afresh, and bring their prisoner in chains of guilt unto the bar trembling, and he can escape the trial no longer, before a holy God, Acts xvi. 29, 30. Then what fear, sorrow and anxiety, seize the prisoner's soul, while he sees a just Judge on the throne, a strict and severe law laid before him, and he has a guilty conscience within! And he must undergo a trial for his life, not the life of the body only, but of soul and body for evermore. These things may seem idle tales to some; but if ye have not experienced the reality of them, ye shall do it, or dreadful shall the judgment after death be to you.

Fifthly, Then the indictment, or criminal libel, is read in the ears of the trembling sinner before the Judge, and that by the law, which manages the accusation so as the pannel shall stand speechless, Rom. iii. 10—19. Every one of the ten commands accuse him of innumerable evils and transgressions. His omissions and commissions are laid in broadband before him; his sins of heart, lip and life, and the sin of his nature, are all charged upon him, and that with their several aggravations. And sentence is demanded against the pannel, according to justice, and agreeable to the law, Gal. iii. 10. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'

Sixthly, Then the sinner must plead guilty or not, to the indictment. Indeed, if he were innocent, he might plead not guilty, deny the libel, and thereupon he would be justified. But, alas! this plea is not for us poor sinners. For, (1.) It is utterly false, Rom. iii. 10. Eccl. vii. 20. Jam. iii. 2. And, (2.) Falsehood can never bear out before God's judgment-seat. There is no want of evidence to prove all. Conscience within is as a thousand witnesses, and will testify against the sinner. The Judge is omniscient, and there is no concealing of our crimes from him. Therefore this plea will not do, Rom. iii. 20. The sinner then must needs plead guilty, confess the libel, and every article of it, acknowledge the debt, and every article of it, though he is utterly unable to pay, Rom. iii. 19.

Seventhly, The sinner being convicted by his own confession as guilty, is put to it to plead, What he has to say why the sentence of death eternal should not pass against him, according to law and justice, and why he should not be hauled from the judgment-seat to

execution. Here, what shall he plead at this awful period of time, where his state for eternity is just upon the turning point? Shall he plead mercy for mere mercy's sake, casting himself down at the Judge's feet? Justice interposes betwixt mercy and the sinner, and pleads that the Judge of all the earth must do right, that he cannot prostitute his honour for the safety of rebels, but must magnify the law, and make it honourable. The truth of God interposes, and says, the word is already gone out of the Judge's mouth, and must be accomplished, That without shedding of blood there is no remission. Whither shall the sinner turn now? Can the saints help? No; they cannot spare any of their oil. Can angels do nothing? No; their united stock would not be sufficient to clear the debt. The sinner then must die the death, and sink under his own burden, if help come not from another quarter. So,

Eighthly, The formerly despised Mediator, the great Advocate at this court, who takes the desperate causes of sinners in hand, and expedites them, offers himself now, in this extremity, to the sinner, with his perfect righteousness, and all his salvation. The sinner embraces him with heart and good-will, enters into the covenant, by faith lays hold on him, renounces all other claims, and betakes himself to his alone merits and suretyship. Now is the sinner united to Christ, and by virtue of that union has communion with him, particularly in his righteousness, and so stands before God in the white raiment of the Mediator's righteousness. Now has the sinner a plea that will infallibly bring him off.

He pleads, he is guilty indeed; yet he must not die, for Christ has died for him. The debt was a just debt; but the Cautioner has paid it, and therefore he craves up his discharge. The law's demands were just; but they are all answered already, both as to doing and suffering. The soul is now married to Christ; and therefore, if the law or justice want any thing, they must seek it of the Husband, and not of her, seeing the soul is thereby put under covert. Therefore the convicted believing sinner gets in under the covert of the Mediator's blood, which stands open in that court; and there stands and pleads against all that law or justice can demand, that he must not die, but be graciously acquitted.

Lastly, Hereupon God the great Judge sustaining the plea passes the sentence of justification on the sinner, according to the everlasting agreement that passed betwixt the Father and the Son, Isa. liii. 11. The pannel gets the white stone and new name, and so is for ever set beyond the reach of condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. This is excellently described by Elihu, Job xxxiii. 22, 23, 24. 'Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If

there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.' This great benefit consists of two parts, as I observed before.

FIRST, The pardon of sin, Acts xiii. 38, 39. 'Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' The sinner having this act of grace passed in his favour, is fully indemnified as to all crimes committed by him against the honour and law of the King of heaven, so as they shall never be charged upon him any more. Here I shall shew,

1. What pardon is.
2. The properties of it.
3. Its many sweet names, that discover the nature of it.

First, I shall shew what pardon is. It is not the taking away the nature of sin, pardoned sin is still sin; God justifies the sinner, but will never justify his sin. Nor is it the removing of the intrinsic demerit of sin; it still deserves condemnation, though it shall never actually condemn the sinner, Rom. viii. 1. Nor is it a simple delay of the punishment, a reprieve is no pardon.

There are four things to be considered in sin. (1.) The reigning power of it, which is broken in regeneration and sanctification, Rom. vi. 14. (2.) The blot and stain, which is taken away in the gradual advances of sanctification, 1 Cor. vi. 11. (3.) The indwelling power, which is removed in glorification, Heb. xii. 23. (4.) The guilt, which is taken away in pardon.

Guilt is an obligation to punishment. The guilt of an unjustified sinner is an obligation lying upon his head, to bear the wrath and eternal vengeance of God, to satisfy justice for the breaking of his law. It is a bond binding him to go to the prison of hell, and lie there till he hath paid the utmost farthing of his debt of sin, 2 Thess. i. 9. It arises from the sanction of the law, Gen. ii. 17. So that the sinner, like Shimei, having broke his confinement, is a man of death.

Pardon is the taking away of this guilt, this dreadful obligation. While the criminal stands bound with the cords of guilt for execution, a pardoning God says, 'Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom, Job xxxiii. 24. Pardon cuts the knot, whereby guilt ties sin and wrath together, cancels the bond obliging the sinner to pay his debt, reverses the sentence of condemnation, and puts him out of the law's reach.

Secondly, I am to shew the properties of this pardon.—These are chiefly three. It is,

1. Full: Micah vii. 19. 'Thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' Col. ii. 13.—'Having forgiven you all trespasses.' All the man's sins are pardoned together. God gives no half-pardons; it suits not either the riches of his grace, nor the sinner's necessity. For one leak will sink the ship, and so will one unpardoned sin damn the soul. Great and small sins, sins against the gospel and the law, the most and least heinous, in the happy hour of pardon, sink down all together into the sea of the Redeemer's blood, Jer. l. 20. And every sin is fully pardoned.

As to the question, Whether all sins, past, present, and to come, are pardoned together and at once in justification? As to sins past and present, there is no difficulty, they are all at once pardoned. As to sins to come, a justified person, being in Christ, can never more incur the guilt of eternal wrath, but only the guilt of fatherly chastisements, so that the pardon before described needs never be renewed. And the only pardon a justified person has to seek is that of the guilt of fatherly anger with the intimation of the other pardon. For if a justified person could ever again be liable actually to the eternal wrath of God for his sin, then either he must fall from his union with Christ, which is indissoluble, or he may be in Christ, and yet under condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Besides, a person once in Christ is no more under the dominion of the law, and therefore cannot be under its curse, Rom. vi. 14. and vii. 4*.

2. Free: So says the text, *Being justified freely*, Col. ii. 13. It is free to us, though to Christ it was the price of blood. What have we to give for a pardon? Could we weep as many tears as the sea has drops, afflict ourselves as many years as the world has stood minutes, it would not buy a pardon, since it is not infinite, Psal. xliv. 8. Our best duties are but rags, and cannot cover the menstruous rags, and would but cover one unclean thing with another; the sins of our unrighteousness with the sins of our righteousness. The sinner never pays for it, nor can pay for it, Isa. xliii. 24, 25.

3. Unalterable and irrevocable. Temporal mercies are lent, but pardon is given; it is a grace-gift, (Rom. xi. 29.), that God never repents of bestowing. When God writes a sinner's pardon, whoever quarrel it, conscience, Satan, &c. God says, What I have written, I have written. Come after what will, it must stand for ever. No following misdemeanors can take it off, Jer. xxxi. 34. 'I

* See the author's *Miscellaneous Questions*, quest. 2.

will forget their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' Isa. liv. 9.—'I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, &c. A child of God may lose the sense of his pardon, but the pardon itself is written in the Mediator's blood, and so is one of those same mercies mentioned, Isa. lv. 3.

Thirdly, Farther to shew the nature of pardon of sin, it has many sweet names, discovering its nature. And,

1. It is a blotting out of sin: 'I even I,' says Jehovah, 'am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake,' Isa. xliii. 25. This is an allusion to a creditor, who, when he discharges a debt, scores it out of his count-book. Sin is a debt, the worst of debts. We cannot pay it, we cannot escape the hands of our creditor. And, alas! we are ready to deny our debt, will not come to count and reckoning, as long as we can get it shifted. So the debt stands in God's book. But the sinner being apprehended, as said is, he is brought to count and reckoning. God produces the large account. The sinner's heart falls at the sight; he falls down, confesses his debt, and his inability to pay, flies to the great Cautioner, saying, 'Undertake for me,'—Psal. cxix. 122; and Christ says, All thy wants be upon me. Then God takes the pen, dips it in the Mediator's blood, and cross-scores all the sinner's account, Acts iii. 19. Col. ii. 14.

2. A not imputing of sin, Psal. xxxii. 2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.' This is a metaphor from merchants, who, when a rich friend undertakes for one of their poor debtors, charge their accounts no more upon him; they will seek him no more for it. God took Christ's single bond for the debt of all that would put themselves in Christ's poor roll by faith. So as soon as a sinner comes to Christ by faith, and gives in his name as a broken man unable to pay his debt, accepting of Christ as Cautioner, God imputes sin no more to that man. What accounts have been taken on by the sinner, he leaves the Son to clear with his Father. This is sustained in the court of heaven: the Creditor and the Cautioner take the matter between them, and the debt is charged no more on the sinner.

3. A taking of the burden of sin from off the sinner, Psal. xxxii. 1. Hos. xiv. 2. Sin is a heavy burden, a burden increasing every day, to the unpardoned sinner. It sunk down the angels from their first habitation, and is a weight that they and the damned in hell are wrestling under at this day, but unable to get it off. The unawakened sinner finds it not; but when the conscience is awakened, it burdens the sinner all over; it is a burden on his head, on his spirit, on his back. In the day of pardon, the sinner falls

down under his burden, looks to Christ the great Burden-bearer, and God comes and takes his burden off his back, and bids him stand upright. And none else can do it, Numb. xiv. 17, 18, 19.

4. A washing of the sinner, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are washed.' They that have unpardoned guilt on them, they have not only a heavy, but a foul, filthy burden on them.—And they must be washed and thoroughly washed, for it sticks closely to the soul, Psal. li. 2. 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' Hence the Lord offers, Isa. i. 18. 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' In the day of pardon, the Lord sprinkles the sinner with the Mediator's blood, and he is made clean, yea dips him in that fountain, Zech. xiii. 1; and he is purged and purified from all sin, 1 John i. 7.

5. A dismissing or remission of sin, Matth. vi. 12. Rom. iii. 25. God does not only take it away, but sends it away. The sinner's guilt is laid over on Christ, as the scape-goat who bears it away never to return on the sinner. Sin is a strong tie, whereby the sinner is bound down to the pit, so as he cannot lift up his head to the Lord with true confidence. Pardon brings a relaxation to the sinner, cutting asunder these cords of death. It is a sending sin, away from the sinner, back to the devil from whence it came.

6. The dispelling of a thick cloud, Isa. xliv. 22. Sin is a cloud rising from below: a watery cloud, a black cloud, a thick cloud: which once drowned the whole world, except those in the ark. It hangs night and day over the head of the unpardoned sinner, go where he will. He cannot see the face of God through it; it vails his mercy, wraps him up in blackness of darkness, that he can have no communion with heaven. But pardon, like the shining sun, breaks through the cloud, and dissolves it; and like a mighty wind, there is a breathing from the throne of grace, that rends the cloud and scatters it, be it never so thick; so that all the sinner's guilt as a cloud vanishes away, and appears no more. Thus the soul is restored to the light of God's countenance, and may look up with confidence and joy, Job xxxiii. 24, 26.

7. A casting of sin behind the Lord's back, Isa. xxxviii. 17. David says, 'his sin was ever before him,' Psal. li. 4. before him as the accuser stood before the accused face to face. Praying for pardon, he prays God would hide his face from it, Psal. li. 9. A pardoning God will not look on the sin of the sinner that is in Christ, Numb. xxiii. 21. 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.' The Lord sitting on a throne of grace,

to which the believer carries his process from the throne of strict justice, when Satan gives in his bill or libel against the believer, takes it and casts it away behind his back, as not to look on it, nor charge him with it.

8. A casting it into the depths of the sea, Mic. vii. 19.—O the fulness of that expression! He will not cast them into a brook or river, what falls in there may be got up again perhaps; but into the sea, where we reckon a thing dead that falls. But there are some shallow places in the sea; he will cast them into the depths of the sea, these devouring depths. But what if they sink not? he will cast them in with force and power, that they shall go to the ground, and sink as lead in the ocean of the blood of Christ.

9. A covering of sin, Psal. xxxii. 1. This is an allusion to what the Lord commanded the Israelites in their camp in the wilderness, Deut. xxiii. 14. It is the same word in the Hebrew. It is a covering of it so as to hide it, that it shall not appear. Sin is the worst of pollutions, but a pardon spreads a cover over it, that it shall not appear any more. God condemned sin in the flesh of Christ, Rom. viii. 3. and therefore, as soon as the soul takes hold of Christ, the word of pardon goes out of the King's mouth, and sin, like the face of Haman, in such a case, is covered never to see the light any more.

10. *Lastly*, Which crowns all, a not remembering of sin, Jer. xxxi. 34. What can be said more to shew the fulness of pardon? Many forgive, but they will never forget the offences done them: but our God, when he pardons, not only forgives, but as it were forgets the injury done to his glory by the sinner. It is true, God's perfections cannot admit a proper forgetting; but the believer's sins are forgotten in law; there is an irreversible act of oblivion passed upon them all in the court of heaven; and God will not only not exact the punishment of them, but will treat believers as kindly as if they had never offended him. Looking on them through Christ, he beholds them without spot.

Behold the way to be secured against sin's finding you out in wrath. O unspeakable benefit! Well may we sing and say with David, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'

SECONDLY, The acceptation of the person as righteous in the sight of God. God justifying a sinner does not only pardon his sin, but accepts and accounts his person righteous in his sight, 2 Cor. v. 21. 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Rom. iv.

6. 'Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.' Chap. v. 19. 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' This is the import of justifying, namely, a declaring, accepting, or accounting one righteous, as one who being pursued before a court, gets his absolviture, and is declared an honest man in the point wherewith he was charged. There is a twofold acceptation in point of righteousness here to be carefully distinguished.

1. An acceptation of a man's works as righteous. 2. Of his person. All righteousness is a conformity to a law. Whatsoever comes up to what the law demands, is righteous; and what doth not is unrighteous. God hath given unto man a law, viz. the moral law, which is the eternal rule of righteousness, that never changes. So all righteousness in the sight of God is a conformity unto that law. And there is no conformity to the law, but what is so in all points. So that righteousness is a perfect conformity to the ten commands in full obedience. Now, there is,

1. An acceptation of a man's works as righteous, Gal. iii. 12. 'The man that doth them shall live in them.' He that doth his works in a full conformity to the law, his works shall be accepted as righteous. But where is the man that can so do? The man Christ did so, and his works were accepted as righteous. But since God's judgment is according to truth, and he cannot account things to be what really they are not; and it is evident that even a believer's works are not righteous in the eye of the law; God neither doth nor can, in the justifying of a sinner, accept and account his works as righteous. So that this acceptation has no place in our justification. And though some of a believer's works, namely, his good works, are accepted of God, Deut. xxxiii. 11. Isa. lvi. 7. yet that is not in point of justification, but of sanctification; not as righteous, but as sincere tokens of their love to God, as the father accepts the work of his child, though it be not quite right, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

2. An acceptation of a man's person as righteous, Eph. i. 6.—'Hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' This may be done without any eye to a work done by the man himself. If a man were processed for a debt he really took on, and which he never paid in his own person, yet if he can produce the discharge of the debt given to one that paid it for him, he will be absolved and the law will declare him to be owing nothing to the pursuer. Thus his person is accepted as righteous; and thus the believer is accepted as a righteous person in justification, though his works are not.

To be accepted as righteous, then, is to be accounted conformable to the law, a person of whom the law has what it requires, and of

whom it has no more to demand. Its demands are extremely high; universal, perfect, and uninterrupted obedience. But the believer, when he is justified, is accepted, as one in respect of whom the debt is paid to the uttermost farthing, Rom. iii. ult. and x. 4. Col. ii. 10. This is an unspeakable benefit; for thereby,

(1.) The bar in the way of abounding mercy is taken away, so that the rivers of compassion may flow towards the believer, Rom. v. 1. &c. Job xxxiii. 24, &c. Many look confidently for the mercy of God, that will be disappointed; the unsatisfied law will draw a bar between them, and lock up saving mercy under the bars of God's justice and truth, which cannot be broken. But the believer being accepted as righteous, the law's mouth is stopt, justice and truth have nothing to object against mercy's flowing to them.

(2.) The person is by this means adjudged to eternal life, even agreeably to the constitution of the law, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. Acts xxvi. 18. Life was promised in the first covenant upon the fulfilling of the law. Now, the law having all it can demand of the believer, it is very agreeable thereto, that he be adjudged to everlasting life. Thus what sets salvation far from unbelievers, contributes to the believer's security. As if two men had been bound severally in one tack, and both desire to go away at a certain time, the conditions are fulfilled for the one, but not for the other. The tack that secures the one's liberty, will hold the other fast; till the conditions be fulfilled, he cannot go. So all men were bound in the covenant of works to yield perfect obedience; but having failed, Christ substituted himself in the room of those chosen from among them to everlasting life, and gave complete obedience to the law in their name and place; on that account they are accepted and adjudged to eternal life, and that agreeably to the law, which has got all its demands of them in their Surety. But the rest being still under the law, must perish.

(3.) The accusations of Satan and the clamours of an evil conscience are hereby to be stilled. See how the apostle triumphs over and bids a defiance to all the believer's accusers, Rom. viii. 33, 34. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' God's sentence of justification may be opposed to the condemnation that one may be laid under from devils and men. He that has the discharge of the debt in his pocket, needs not fear what any can say or do unto him on account of the debt.

(4.) *Lastly*, He needs not seek acceptance of his person with God

by his works, for he has it already another way. This is the way hypocrites take for acceptance, that will not come to Christ. But, alas! they do not consider that they are labouring in vain; it is impossible to get it that way, Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32. 'What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.' It is one of the main differences betwixt the two covenants. In the first, man's works were to be accepted, and then his person; but in the second, first his person is accepted, and then his works. In the first, God dealt with man as a master with his servant, who pleases him just as he works his work; in the second, as a father with his child, who pleases his father as he is his own child, and so his work is taken off his hand, such as it is. So they that seek acceptance with God by their works, go quite contrary to the nature of the covenant of grace, and hold on the way of the covenant of works, in which one will never thrive now. But the believer is not required to seek acceptance with God in this fruitless way. So far of the parts of justification.

III. The next general head is to shew the cause of our justification, namely, the meritorious, or procuring or material cause of it. When we consider what the justification of a sinner is, well may we with wonder cry out, How can these things be! How can a guilty sinner be pardoned by a just and jealous God! an unrighteous one accepted as righteous, by an infinitely perfect judge! We see in the world, among men, such a thing brought to pass by several means.

1. By the powerfulness of the guilty party, that the judge dare not but let them go free. Some men are so unhappy for themselves and others as to be too strong for laws, as David complains of Joab and Abishai, saying, 'These men the sons Zeruiah be too hard for me,' 2 Sam. iii. ult. and their begging a pardon is in effect the commanding of it. But what is worm-man before the omnipotency of God! where is he that is able to make head against him, that in his favour he should 'pervert judgment?' Job xxxiv. 12, &c.

2. By the weakness of the judge's understanding, that he cannot fix guilt on the guilty. Sometimes the crime is so hiddenly committed, that man cannot say, this is the guilty man. Sometimes, when the judge is convinced of the party's guilt, yet he can by no means legally fix it on him, and so there is necessity to pass him.

But God is omniscient, and can never be at a loss to discover the guilty person, nor want evidence to fix it upon him, Psalm cxxxix. 7. 1 Sam. ii. 3.

3. By bribes. These blind the eyes of the wise and pervert judgment. But what can we give to God, who have nothing but what is his? Job xli. 11. His infinite fulness and all-sufficiency sets him beyond all possibility of affecting him thus, Job xxxvi. 19. And if we would essay to affect him with our goodness, repentance, or reformation, behold he is beyond these too, Job xxxv. 7. 'If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?'

4. *Lastly*, By feud or favour prevailing over respect to justice. But with God there is no respect of persons. All are alike to him. And he neither despises any, so as not to regard what they do, which sometimes make some guilty ones get free, Job xxxvi. 5. And there is no preposterous pity with him in prejudice of justice, as there is in some men of a too soft disposition, to execute justice, Psal. xi. 6, 7.

From all which it follows, that there is some just ground upon which a sinner believing is justified before God. And we must inquire what that is,

First, Negatively. It is not upon any worth or merit in the sinner himself. The text rejects that, *Being justified freely by his grace.* We neither are nor can be justified by our inherent righteousness, or good works. For,

1. Scripture expressly teaches, that we are not nor can be justified by our own works, but by faith, which leads us to the righteousness of another, Rom. iii. 20, 28. (compare Psal. cxliii. 2.) Gal. ii. 16. All works are excluded without distinction or limitation, and faith and works are opposed; the latter being inconsistent with gospel-grace, Rom. xi. 6.

2. The way of a sinner's justification laid down in the gospel excludes boasting, Rom. iii. 27. But justification by works excludes it not, ibid. but leaves ground for it, Rom. iv. 2. It is the design of the gospel to exclude it, Eph. ii. 9. So that that way is opposite to the design of the gospel.

3. *Lastly*, All our good works are imperfect, Isa. lxiv. 6. and they are mixed with many sinful works, Jam. iii. 2. So that they can never make a righteousness which is truly and properly so in the eye of the law. And therefore to declare a man righteous on the account of them, would be to declare besides the truth. But 'we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth,' Rom. ii. 2. It must be a perfect righteousness on which a person can be justified

before a holy, just God. For the relaxation of the gospel is not, that an imperfect righteousness is accepted instead of a perfect one, Rom. iii. ult. This perfect righteousness can never be patched up of our imperfect pieces of obedience.

Nay, suppose we could perfectly obey the law from the moment of our conversion, yea, of our birth, all is due for itself. How could that satisfy for the sin we were born with, or our sins before conversion? Repentance and tears cannot satisfy. Without shedding of blood there is no remission. And if once the law get down the sinner to be satisfied of him, how shall he get up again?

And neither can they contribute so much as in part to justify us. For, (1.) At that rate the grace of God should be so far excluded, and some room left for boasting. (2.) The cleanest of our own robes would effectually ruin us, if not washed in the Lamb's blood. And (3.) Christ's righteousness is perfect, and not dealt by shreds.

SECONDLY, Positively. The righteousness of Christ is the procuring cause of our justification. In handling of this, I shall shew,

1. What Christ's righteousness is.

2. That we are justified by Christ's righteousness.

3. What way a sinner can be justified by a righteousness not wrought by himself, but by Christ.

4. How the justifying of a sinner thus consists with the honour of God's justice, and of his law.

5. How it consists with free grace.

First, I shall shew what Christ's righteousness is. There is a twofold righteousness of Christ. (1.) His essential righteousness, which he had from eternity as God. This was common to all the three persons, and natural; and therefore cannot be that righteousness of Christ whereby sinners are justified. (2.) His Mediatory righteousness, peculiar to him as the Father's servant, and the Mediator betwixt God and man. This is it. And that was his conformity to the law, in the perfect obedience he gave it, when he put his neck under the yoke of the law for an elect world, to satisfy it, in all that it had to demand of them.

1. He obeyed the commands of it, Phil. ii. 18. All the ten commands in their utmost extent had their due from him, in both tables. He was born holy, without sin; he lived without blemish, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners; and was ever doing good. His obedience was universal; as to all the commands, he kept them; perfect as to every command, in the degrees of it required by the law; constant and perpetual, without the least interruption; and voluntary and unconstrained, in respect of the principle of heartiness and willingness in it. Thus he did, as became him, fulfil all righteousness, Matth. iii. 15.

2. He suffered the penalty of the law, which had been broken, Phil. ii. 8. The elect's debt was charged upon him completely, and he answered for it. Then 'he restored that which he took not away,' Psal. lxix. 4. Death was the penalty, Gen. ii. 17. And death in its various shapes seized on him. The forerunners of it met him at his first entrance into the world, when he was born in a very low condition, and was forced to be carried into Egypt, to save him from Herod's bloody hands. They hung about him all the days of his life, so that he was a man of sorrows, though not of sin. At length death advanced against him with all its joint forces together: and heaven, earth, and hell, all set on him together, till they brought him to the dust of death; and then he was carried death's prisoner to the grave, where he lay till it was declared the debt was paid, and the law had no more to demand.

Thus he conformed himself to the law, and satisfied it in all points. And this was his righteousness, and that very righteousness upon which every believing sinner is justified, as a debtor is absolved from the creditor's libel of debt, seeing the debt is paid by a cautioner.

Secondly, I shall shew that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ.

1. This is the plain doctrine of the scriptures of the Old Testament, where he is called 'our righteousness,' Jer. xxiii. 6. See Isa. xlv. 24, 25. The apostle, 1 Cor. i. 30. tells us, that he is 'made righteousness to us,' not by affecting our righteousness, as he is our sanctification, for then justification and sanctification should be one and the same; but by imputation. And 2 Cor. v. 21. 'We are made the righteousness of God in him.' This was the only righteousness Paul desired to shelter himself under, Phil. iii. 9. In a word, he is the second Adam, Rom. v. 18, 19. 'Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

2. Our justification is the justification of the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5; which cannot be therefore by our own righteousness, but the righteousness of another, even of a Redeemer, according to that, Rom. v. 9. 'Much more being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him;' our sins being imputed to him, and his righteousness to us, Gal. iii. 13. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'

3. *Lastly*, There is nothing else we can lay claim to, which can

satisfy the law. And it must needs be satisfied ere the sinner can be justified. For the law must be magnified and made honourable. Hence the scripture does so much notice, that by this way the law is established, which otherwise would be undermined, Rom. iii. 31. its righteousness fulfilled, Rom. viii. 4. and hath its end for perfection, chap. x. 4.

Thirdly, I proceed to shew, what way a sinner can be justified by a righteousness not wrought by himself, but by Christ. This will be clear, if ye consider these four concurring grounds.

1. Christ's suretyship which he voluntarily took on himself, Heb. vii. 22. What Christ did and suffered, he did and suffered as a public person, for an elect world, not as a private person for himself. They took on the debt, he paid it for them; what the law or justice had to demand of him, he undertook to clear for their behoof. Thus a foundation is laid for justification by his righteousness.

2. The gospel-offer wherein Christ and all his salvation and benefits are freely offered to all such as will receive the same. There he is offered in a suitableness to the needs of sinners, Rev. iii. 18. And, amongst other things, Christ with his righteousness, is offered to the unrighteous; as with his sanctifying Spirit to the unholy. Thus his righteousness is in a fair way to become theirs, as a free gift, to be theirs to whom it is offered.

3. The faith of the elect, whereby Christ's righteousness becomes actually theirs, Gal. ii. 16. 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' For it is the very nature of faith to receive the free gift of righteousness, and by our receiving it upon the offer, it becomes ours. But there is no way to receive Christ's righteousness, but with himself; for God gives not Christ's benefits apart from himself, but with himself, which is the way of the covenant. And hence we may see three things:

(1.) That it is by faith only Christ's righteousness becomes ours, and that we have an actual interest in it, and are put in possession of it, Phil. iii. 9.—'The righteousness which is by faith.' Whatever foundation may be laid for it in the decree of God's election, and in Christ's satisfaction in our stead, yet it is not but by faith that we are possessed of it, or can plead it before the Lord. For as Adam's sin cannot hurt us till we have a being in him naturally; so Christ's righteousness cannot profit us till we be in him by faith.

(2.) How Christ's righteousness becomes ours by faith. Faith

unites us to Christ in the way of the spiritual marriage-covenant, Eph. ii. 17. Being united to him, we have a communion with him in all the benefits of his purchase, and so in his righteousness, which is one of the chief of them. He himself is ours by faith; and so all that is his is ours for our good. This union being most real, the communion is so too. And hence we are said to be 'crucified with him,' Gal. ii. 20; 'buried with him,' Rom. vi. 4; yea, 'raised with him,' Eph. ii. 6.

(3.) How we are justified by faith. Not that faith is our righteousness; for our righteousness is not our faith, but we get it by faith, Phil. iii. 9. We are justified by it instrumentally, as we say one is enriched by a marriage, when by it he gets what makes him rich. So that faith is that whereby the soul is married to Christ; and being married to him, has communion with him in his righteousness, which justifies the person before God.

4. God's imputation, whereby he reckons Christ's righteousness to be the believer's in law: as the judge sustains the husband's payment for the wife's, and so absolves her from any action the pursuer can have against her for the debt, Rom. iv. 6. This imputation or reckoning of the judge is according to the truth of the thing, Christ's righteousness being really the believer's righteousness antecedently to the imputation, namely, by faith. So that Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer, because it is really his; and it is not therefore really his, because it is imputed to him.

Fourthly, I come now to shew how the justifying of a sinner thus consists with the honour of God's justice, and of his law. Very well does it so consist; for God's justice and law have more honour by Christ's obedience and death, than they could have had by the obedience or death of the justified party.

1. What are all the creatures together in comparison of the Son of God, in point of greatness and excellency? Did David's men say of him, who was but a creature of their own kind, 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us?' 2 Sam. xviii. 3. so may not we say of him, who was the Father's fellow, Thou art worth ten thousand worlds of us? When a king puts his own Son, and heir to the crown, to death, for transgressing the laws, his justice is more conspicuous, and the law more honoured, than by the execution of a thousand ordinary malefactors. So that we may say, that God's justice, and respect to his law, appeared more in mount Calvary, than it does in hell; for in the one was God, in the other were creatures groaning out for a broken law.

2. Suppose the company of the justified had, for the honour of the law and justice, been all sent to hell together; yet they would ever

have been but satisfying, they never could have come up to the full satisfaction, so as there might be no more to demand of them. For infinite justice can never be completely satisfied by a finite creature; and therefore hell-torments are eternal. But here, by Jesus Christ, justice gets the least and last farthing paid down? and the law has till it can demand no more, John xix. 30.

3. *Lastly*, By Christ's obedience and death, law and justice are honoured both actively and passively. Now, if Adam had stood and been justified by his works, they had been only glorified actively. If the now justified had been damned for their sin, and suffered for it for ever, they had been only glorified passively; but now, by this way of the Mediator's suretyship, they are glorified both ways. He has obeyed the law's commands to the least. He has suffered the wrath and curse of God to the utmost, which the creature could never have done; and borne it with that patience, submission, and resignation, and is quite beyond the reach of a mere creature, Isa. liii. 7.

So the believer's justification is on the surest grounds. The justice of God and his law consent to it, as that which is more for their honour than the ruin of the sinner.

Fifthly, I come now to shew how the justification of a sinner by the righteousness of Christ consists with free grace. If our justification be thus purchased by the perfect obedience and satisfaction of Christ, how is it of free grace? I answer, Very well. For,

1. God accepted of a surety, when he might have held by the sinner himself, and insisted that the soul that sinned might die, Rom. v. 8. What was it but free grace that moved him, when the neck of all the elect was upon the block, to allow it to rise up without receiving the fatal blow, and accepting of a Surety in their room? Could any man oblige the Judge to this? God did this freely.

2. God himself provided the Surety, John iii. 16. When Isaac lay bound on the altar, God provided the ram for the burnt-offering. What could man have done to get a cautioner when he broke, in the first covenant? Among all the beasts of the field there could not be found an atoning sacrifice, Ps. xl. 6. All the angels in heaven could not have afforded a cautioner. But free grace set infinite wisdom on work to find out one, which pitched on the Son of God, Psal. lxxxix. 19. So the Father gives his own Son, and the Son takes on man's nature, and pays the debt. What is there here but riches of grace to the justified sinner? So it is God's own righteousness, Phil. iii. 9. freely given to us. The which if it had not, as the tree fell, it behoved to have lain for ever.

3. *Lastly*, God demands nothing of us for it. It is a rich pur-

chase, a dear purchase, the price of blood: but the righteousness and the justification are given to us most freely through faith. That is, we Have it, for Take and have. And the very hand wherewith we receive it, namely faith, is the free gift of God unto us, Eph. ii. 8. So that most evident it is, that we are justified freely by his grace.

I come now to make some practical improvement of this important subject.

Use I. Of information. From what is said, learn,

1. That they are poor fools who have slight thoughts of sin and guilt. How many think very little of unpardoned guilt? There is a band lying on their head, obliging them to bear God's wrath for their sin; yet they rest in peace. They are lying under a sentence of condemnation, and know not how soon they may be led out to execution; yet they are at ease. They are drawing on more guilt daily without fear, and so making their bonds stronger. O, Sirs! look here and see the evil of sin, the dreadful nature of guilt. Nothing less could take sin away, and break asunder these bands, than the death of our Redeemer. Behold it in this glass, and be afraid of it.

2. How ill does it set us to have cheap thoughts of pardon! Num. xiv. 17, 19. 'God forgive me,' is a common word in some people's mouths, set off with a laugh. Most people fancy it is an easy thing to get a pardon. They know God is full of mercy, Christ of bowels, no more ado but to make a confession, pray to God to forgive them, and all is well; as if they might live like lions, and then leap like lambs out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom. But if ever ye get a pardon, ye will change your mind, and find it has cost Christ dear; it is written in his blood, and will cost you broken bones ere ye obtain it.

3. Faith is absolutely necessary, Rom. v. 1. There is no justification without faith, and no access to heaven for the unjustified. While you continue in a state of unbelief, guilt girds you about as cords of death. And till ye believe and come to Christ, none of them all will be loosed, but they will weigh you down to destruction. O then come to Christ, and believe, accept of the Cautioner in the covenant. Without union with him, ye can have no share in his righteousness, and without faith no union with Christ.

4. No sin is so great, but one may be justified from it, if he will come to Christ, and close with him, 2 Cor. v. 21. It is Christ's righteousness upon which a sinner is justified, and that is an everlasting righteousness, a righteousness of infinite value; and no sin

is so great but it will swallow it up. There is none so broad but this white raiment will cover it. No guilt so strong but this will break it.

5. Most miserable will their case be, that shall be left to feel their own weight, Psal. xciv. ult. He 'shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.' Many see not their need of Christ and his righteousness now: but when that falls on them for their own sin, that fell on him for the sins of those he bare, they will find their punishment like Cain's greater than what they can bear. What the Cautioner was put to in paying the debt of sin, may fright every one with the thoughts of their answering for their own.

6. *Lastly*, Happy is the case of the justified, Psal. xxxii. 1. They are secured as to their state, no more under wrath, Rom. viii. 1. Their eternal salvation is sure, and can never fail, Rom. viii. 30. They have got over the gulph of condemnation, and shall never fall therein. Whom God justifies now, he will not condemn hereafter.

USE II. Of trial. By what is said, ye may try your state, whether ye be justified or not. And ye have reason to put this matter to trial accurately and exactly. For,

1. One thing is sure, that every man is once under a sentence of condemnation, Eph. ii. 3. Gal. iii. 10. Now, what course have ye taken to get from under this? and if ye have been aiming at it, have ye carried your point, or not? No man is carried out of the state of condemnation in a morning dream; most men abide in the condemned state they were born in. O try it, whether ye be brought out of it or not.

2. As your state is in this life in point of justification, so it will be determined at death and the last day, Eccl. ix. 10. This life is the time of trial; in the other, the judgment will pass upon men according to what they have been in this world. Now the door of mercy stands open for pardons; but death being once come, there is no more access to a pardon. As the tree falls, it must lie.

3. Men are very apt to mistake their state in this matter. Many draw a pardon to themselves, that God will not set his seal to, and all it serves for is to blind their own eyes, Isa. xliv. 20. The foolish virgins dreamed very confidently of peace with God; but they met with a sad disappointment. They called themselves the friends of the Bridegroom, but he shut the door on them as on his enemies.

4. *Lastly*, A mistake in this point is very dangerous. It makes

people let the time of obtaining a pardon slip, as fancying they have it already. The foolish virgins might have got oil to their lamps, if they had seen the want of it, ere it was out of time. And thus it brings a ruining surprise, while people sleeping to death, in their dreams of peace, are awakened by the noise of war that God will have with them for ever and ever, without any more possibility of truce. Now, ye may try it by the following things.

1. Have ye been apprehended, sisted before God the Judge, and brought to a reckoning of your sins? No man gets out his absolviture before the Lord, till he appear and answer to his libel. This is necessary to make the sinner flee to Christ; for this end the law was given, and for this end it is brought into the conscience, Gal. iii. 24. That state of sin which the soul never was made truly sensible of, does without doubt continue. They that never saw themselves in a state of condemnation are to this day under it. To what end should one have looked for healing to the brazen serpent, that were not stung with the fiery serpents? If the law has not had this effect on you to let you see your sin, and stopped your mouth before the Lord, ye are not come to Christ for justification. But if ye have seen your sin and state of condemnation by nature, and so have fled for mercy to Jesus Christ, then ye may conclude ye are justified.

2. I would ask you, Have ye been carried freely out of yourselves to Jesus Christ for righteousness, renouncing all other confidences in whole and in part, Phil. iii. 7, 8? There are many who, being convinced of sin, fall down and beg pardon, and hope for it upon their prayers, repentance, and reformation: but they never consider how the law shall be answered by a perfect righteousness. But the justified person sees, that there is no pardon to be got, without a righteousness that will satisfy the law, and that no work of his can do that; therefore he lays hold on Christ for his righteousness, and pleads that for pardon. They unite with the Mediator by faith, and so he spreads his skirt over them. They get in under the covert of the Mediator's blood, and place their confidence there, believing that it is of sufficiency to shield them from wrath, and trusting upon his righteousness for that end, Phil. iii. 3. They continue not in mere suspense, James i. 6, 7. but so wrestle against doubting, as to cast their anchor, and lay their weight for eternity, upon the righteousness of Christ.

3. The dominion and reigning power of sin is broken in the justified, Rom. vi. 14. Where the condemning power of sin, is removed, its reigning power is also taken away. If the condemned man get his remission, he is taken out of his irons, his prison, and the jailor's

power; and so the pardoned sinner is no more taken captive by Satan at his will, 2 Tim. ii. ult. Will the liar lie on, the swearer swear on, the drunkard drink on, the formalist still hold on with his mere form of godliness, and hope that God has pardoned him? No; let no man deceive himself. Those chains of reigning lusts that are still rattling about thee, declare thee to be yet a condemned man, Rom. viii. 1, 2. Doubt ye not but if ye were justified, ye would be washed? 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. To pretend to the pardon of sin which thou art still living and going on in, is practical blasphemy, as if Christ were the minister of sin; it is a turning the grace of God into licentiousness, which will bring a heavy vengeance at length. But if the reigning power of sin, be broken in thee, thou art a justified man; it is a sign thou art healing, when the strength of the disease of sin is abating.

4. Habitual tenderness of conscience with respect to sin, temptations, and appearance of evil, is a good sign of a justified state, Acts xxiv. 16. Burnt bairns dread the fire; and the man who has brought himself under a sentence of death, if he escape it may be thought, he will beware of falling into the snare again, Isa. xxxviii. 17. compare ver. 15. Justified persons may fall into acts of untenderness many a time; but habitual untenderness is a black mark, when people habitually and ordinarily take to themselves a sinful latitude in their thoughts, words, or actions. It is a sad sign that sin has never been made very bitter to them, when they can so easily go into it. It is easy to pretend to tenderness in opinions, and with respect to church-differences; but would to God there appeared more tenderness among us in matters of morality, that there were more sobriety among us, that people who have money to spare, would give it to the poor, and not lay it out in a way that God has so often visibly blasted, or spend it on their lusts; that men would not by their presence or otherwise encourage penny-weddings (condemned both by the law of the land and the church,) these nurseries of profaneness, which have so often among us left a stink behind them in the nostrils of truly tender persons, and before a holy God. I would recommend to you the apostle's general rule, Phil. iv. 8. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'

5. *Lastly*, The fruits of faith in a holy life. We are justified by faith without works; but that faith that justifies is always followed with good works, Acts xv. 9. If the curse be taken away, under

which the soul remains barren, it will become fruitful in the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23. Our faith justifies our persons as it receives Christ with his righteousness; but our faith must be justified by our works, i. e. it must be by our good works evidenced to be true faith. Therefore the apostle James disputes against that faith that is without works, shewing it to be no true justifying faith, James ii. 17, 18. There is a difference betwixt justification and sanctification, but they are inseparable companions. And no man can evidence his justification without the fruits of holiness. Examine yourselves by these things, what state ye are in before God.

Use III. Of exhortation. This I shall address both to sinners and saints.

First, To sinners yet in the state of sin and wrath. Here is good news of pardon and acceptance with God for you. I would exhort you to be concerned to get out of the state of wrath and condemnation; and while God is sitting on a throne of grace, do not slip the opportunity, but sue out your absolviture from before the Lord in his own way. Take no rest till ye be justified before God through Christ. To make way for this exhortation, I will lay before you the following motives.

Mot. 1. While you are out of a justified state, a sentence of condemnation stands against thee in the court of heaven, and thou knowest not how soon it may be executed, Gal. iii. 10. John iii. 18. and ult. If thou wert under a sentence of death by the laws of men, wouldst thou not bestir thyself for a pardon, if there were any hope? But, poor soul, thou art under a sentence of eternal death; and yet thou livest at ease. God's law has condemned thee as a malefactor, his truth confirms the sentence, and justice craves execution. All things are ready for it. Psal. vii. 12, 13. When thou liest down, thou hast no security that it shall not be executed ere thou arise; and when thou goest out, thou hast no security that it shall not be executed ere thou come in. Only long-suffering procures thee a reprieve one day after another, to see if thou wilt sue out a pardon. But as secure as thou art the sword of justice hangs over thy head by the hair of long-tired patience; and if that break, thou art a dead man.

Mot. 2. A pardon and acceptance with God is not so easily obtained as people generally think. God gives pardon freely, yet none come by it lightly. They that get it, get it so as they are taught to prize the mercy, Mic. vii. 18. They that know not the evil of sin nor the holy just nature of God, and that were never pressed with the sense of unpardoned guilt, think it a very easy thing to get a pardon, as if there were no more but to ask and receive. But I would have you to consider,

(1.) The justifying and pardoning of a sinner is one of the greatest works of God. It is a greater work than to make a world. God had no more ado but to say, in the creation, 'Let there be light, &c. and there was.' But when sinners were to be absolved, justice stands up for satisfaction. The truth of God for the honour of a broken law, wisdom is set awork to find out a way how pardoning mercy may get a vent; and for that cause the Son of God pays down the price of blood to buy the absolviture. If God could have absolved the sinner from guilt and punishment by a bare word, how would he have passed by that easy way, and fetched a compass by the blood of his own Son? John iii. 16. And after all it is a work of power to be exercised according to the greatness of mercy, Numb. xiv. 17, 19.

(2.) Sin is the greatest of evils, no wonder it be hard to take it away. It is of all things most contrary to the holy nature of God. Hab. i. 13. When thou goest on in thy sin, thou art engaged against all the attributes of God. It is a daring of his justice, an invading of his sovereignty, a defying of his power, an abusing of his patience, and a despising of his love, mercy, and goodness. It contradicts his will; thereby the potsherds strive against their Maker, and lusts are set up against his holy law. It robs him of the glory due to him from his creatures, and turns to his dishonour. When God had perfected the frame of the world, and made man and all the creatures for his glory, sin entering marred the whole frame, and made the workmanship of his own hands dishonour him. O! is it not a great work then to get a pardon, and all these injuries buried in forgetfulness with a holy jealous God!

(3.) God's elect have endured sad breakings of heart from the time they are made sensible of sin, till they have got their absolviture from it, Acts ii. 37. They have known the terror of the Lord, to the breaking of their bones, ere they could get a glimpse of his reconciled countenance. Think ye as light of pardon as ye will, if ever the Lord come to give you a spiritual medicine to cause you sweat out the poison of sin, it will make you sick at the heart, if it bring you not to the last gasp, Isa. xxxiii. ult.

(4.) *Lastly*, If ever ye get a pardon, there will be an awful solemnity at the giving of it, Psal. lxxxix. 14. and it will be a very strong faith that will not receive it with a trembling hand, Hos. xi. 10. compare chap. iii. ult. 'They shall fear the Lord,' Heb. 'fear to the Lord.' For God gives no pardons but what are written in the blood of a Redeemer, sufficiently testifying his detestation of the crime; none are got but through the wounds of a Redeemer. So that the very throne of grace stands on justice fully satisfied; and thou shalt

be made to say when thou gettest the pardon, as Jacob did of the place where he had slept all night, 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven,' Gen. xxviii. 17.

Therefore look on it as a matter of the greatest weight, that will not be slightly managed, and to purpose too.

Mot. 3. Consider the dreadful disadvantages that attend an unjustified state. While ye are unjustified,

1. Ye can have no access to God, nor communion with him, Rom. iii. 3. Unpardoned guilt is a partition-wall betwixt God and you, Isa. lix. 2. It stands as the angel with the flaming sword to guard the tree of life, that ye can have no access to it. It is true, ye may attend public ordinances, and go about private and secret duties; but they are all lost, as to communion with God, in the great gulph of an unpardoned state. Ye cannot have a comfortable word out of his mouth, nor a smile of his face.

2. Ye can have no peace with God, Rom. v. 1. What Jehu said to Joram, God says to every unjustified sinner pretending peace with him, 'What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts, are so many?' 2 Kings ix. 22. It is sin that makes God an enemy to the work of his own hands; and while it is not forgiven, there can be no reconciliation. How can they think they can have peace with God whom his law condemns? What peace ye have in your consciences, arises from stupidity and presumption; it is stolen, and is none of God's allowance, Isa. lvii. ult. Neither could ye command it, or retain it, if ye saw your case.

3. Ye can have no fruits of holiness. The conscience must be purged, ere one can serve God acceptably, Heb. ix. 44. or do any work good in God's sight, 1 Tim. i. 5. Justification and sanctification are inseparable, and a justified state goes before a holy life; 'for to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,' Rom. iv. 5. While a man is unpardoned, the curse lies on him; and it is a blasting withering curse, like that on the fig-tree, that no fruit of holiness can grow where it comes. For it stops the communication of sanctifying influences; and the earth shall sooner bring forth its fruits while the influences of the heavens are restrained, than a soul shall do any good work without the influences of Christ's Spirit, John xv. 5.

4. All you do is turned to sin by this means, Psal. xiv. 1. A soul unjustified, is as a tainted vessel that turns every liquor that is put into it. Hence your very civil actions are turned to sin, Prov. xxi. 4. natural actions, Zech. vii. 6. yea, and your religious actions too,

Prov. xv. 1. Isa. lxvi. 3. For as the purest liquor put into a vessel for base uses is loathed, so are the best performances of an unpardoned sinner, by a holy God. For whatever they be as to the matter of them, they are selfish and hateful as to the principle end, and manner.

5. *Lastly*, Hence your accounts are running on every day and moment to the avenging justice of God, Rom. ii. 5. Thou art still deeper and deeper in that fearful debt; the cords of thy guilt are growing stronger and stronger. Thy crimes and grounds of condemnation are multiplied more and more; and though it is only dying for all, yet the more thy guilt is increased, the more will be thy punishment. It is true, that every one is sinning daily; but a justified person's debts are not charged upon him for eternal wrath, but temporary chastisements; so that theirs is but an account of pennies, while thine is that of talents.

Mot. 4. Consider the unspeakable advantages of a pardoned justified state. He that is in that state, is a happy man, whatever his case be otherwise in the world, Psal. xxii. 1.—He may meet with many crosses in a present world, but the white stone given him of God will make him happy for all that, Hab. iii. 17. One may be rich, yet reprobate; his portion fat, but his soul lean; applauded on the earth, but damned in hell. These things come from God's hand; and the crown of worldly felicity set on with his bare hand, he will kick off with his foot at length. But a pardon comes from his heart, as an eternal love token, Rom. xi. 29. O! let the happiness of a justified state engage you to seek after it. Get into the state of pardon; and,

1. Ye shall have peace with God, Rom. v. 1. Sin is the only controversy betwixt God and a soul; when that is removed, the parties are reconciled, and meet together in peace. God justifying the sinner, lays by the legal enmity he bare to him, while he lived in a state of sin. He pursues him no more with wrath or curse. The heavens that are now black above your heads shall clear up, and ye shall enjoy a pleasant sunshine, if the cloud of guilt were dispelled. O, Sirs! do ye not value peace with God? If ye do, then seek to be in this state.

2. It will bring you other peace besides. Peace of conscience follows upon a justified state. Unpardoned guilt makes a foul and condemning conscience, which gnaws a man like a worm. But when one gets his conscience sprinkled with the Redeemer's blood, and his sin pardoned, the conscience is cleansed, Heb. ix. 14. And then it is turned to a good conscience, which sings sweetly in a man's bosom, 2 Cor. i. 12. Yea, ye shall have peace with the crea-

tures, that are at war with the unpardoned sinner, Job v. 23. Having thus gained the favour of the Master of the great family, the servants shall all turn to be your friends.

3. Ye shall have access to God with confidence and holy boldness, Eph. iii. 12. 1 John iii. 21. God shall no more sit on a tribunal of strict justice to you, with the flaming sword before him; but on a throne of grace, with a rainbow round about it, Rev. iv. 3. And ye may come to him with all your wants, complaints, &c. as unto a friend, yea, a Father in Christ, confidently expecting all good things from him, Job xxxiii. 24, 26. For being justified, ye have a satisfaction to plead, upon which he can deny you no good thing; ye are cloathed with a righteousness that makes you spotless, and are under a covert, where love and favour shine continually.

4. Ye shall be delivered from the dominion of sin, Rom. vi. 14. and be made to bring forth the fruits of holiness, Col. ii. 13. As soon as ever the remission is passed the seals, so soon the orders are given to deliver the prisoner, to beat off his chains, and open the prison-door, and set him at liberty. The apostle tells us, that 'the strength of sin is the law,' 1 Cor. xv. 56. namely, the law condemning and cursing the sinner; so that the sinner being under the curse, sin reigns in him with a full sway, as the thorns and briers in the cursed ground. But the law's curse and condemning power being removed in justification, sin loses its strength. And the blessing coming in its room, the soul is made fruitful in holiness. Hence faith's sanctifying virtue is so much insisted on in the word, Acts xv. 9.

5. It will take the venom out of your crosses, and the strongest afflictions ye meet with, 1 Cor. xv. 55. The venom of afflictions is the curse in a cross; but pardon takes out that. A bee-sting your troubles may have after that, but the serpent's sting shall no more be found in them. A pardoned state sanctifies crosses to a man; and a sanctified cross is better than an unsanctified comfort. A loss with God's favour, is more than an enjoyment with God's wrath.

6. It will sweeten your mercies with an additional sweetness, and make a small mercy more valuable than the greatest earthly comfort an unpardoned sinner can have, Psal. xxxvii. 16. Who would not chuse to live at peace in a cottage, on coarse fare, than to be in the case of one under a sentence of death, liberally fed in a castle till the execution-day? A mercy without a pardon will go a short way; the man may cry, 'There is death in the pot,' Mal. ii. 2. But a pardon puts a blessing in a mercy, purifies and refines it, putting a stamp of God's good will on it, Gen. xxxiii. 11.

7. It will make all things work together for your good, Rom. viii. 28. God's wrath and anger against a person mars all to him. It makes every thing work for his ruin: the unpardoned man's crosses are curses, and his good things as well as his evil things work against him, Prov. i. 32. But by the Lord's favour all things shall work through grace to bring the believer to glory. God is for him, who then can be against him? Whether the wind blow on his face, or on his back, it shall forward him to the happy harbour.

8. It is the way to live comfortably, Isa. xl. 1, 2. None in all the world have so good a reason to live comfortably as the justified person. He that gets the white stone of the Lord's absolviture, if he can but look on it, his soul may rejoice within him. If all things in the world were going wrong, he has that to comfort him, that God is his friend. However little he may have in hand, he has all the heavenly inheritance in hope. The uncomfortable life the pardoned sinner has, arises from want of consideration; but the more clearly he sees his matters, he will have the more comfort.

9. *Lastly*, It is the way to die safely and comfortably too. The pardoned sinner may triumph over death and the grave, Rom. viii. 38, 39. 1 Cor. xv. 55. When death comes to him, he has his discharge, it cannot harm him. As for the tribunal, he cannot be condemned there, for he is already justified. He shall swim safe through these dark waters, for the weight of guilt is removed, he cannot sink in them.

Mot. 5. A pardon is in your offer. There is none of us all under the sentence of condemnation, but may get it reversed, if we will come to Christ, and sue out an absolviture in the Lord's own way, Isa. lv. 7. He is a just God we have to do with, but there is a way how pardoning mercy may reach us in a full consistency with justice. The white flag of peace does yet hang out, and the market of free grace stands open. There is an act of grace and full indemnity through Jesus Christ proclaimed in the gospel. Come in, sinners, and take the benefit of it. Why will ye stand out, and despise the King of Heaven's free pardon?

Object. My sins are so great, that I can have no hope of pardon, whatever others may. *Ans.* Neither the greatness nor the multitude of your sins, nor your backsliding into them again and again, put you beyond the reach of pardon. For observe, I pray you, the foundation of pardon is Christ's righteousness, and that is the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. Now, your sins are the sins of a creature; and shall not the righteousness of God be able to remove the unrighteousness of the creature? And it is to all, and upon all that believe, Rom. iii. 22. and remember, as the one abounds, the other superabounds, Rom. v. 20.

God is pleased to heap words of grace one upon another to put tempted sinners in hopes of pardon, Joel ii. 13. 'Rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil,' Isa. i. 18. 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'—Chap. lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' And he has set up many instances of pardoning mercy, that none may despair of finding mercy that will come to him in his own way. Adam, the leading sinner in the world, was pardoned. Manasseh, who gave up himself to the most gross sins of devilry, murder, &c. yet received a pardon. Paul, who was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, obtained mercy. And the very Jews that murdered the Lord of glory, were pardoned through his blood.

These instances of mercy are indeed abused to the encouraging of sinners to go on in their sin: but they were never designed for that; and it is a dreadful sign, when the very gospel-news of pardon become a trap and a snare. But God designed them for thy encouragement, O trembling sinner, that would fain come to God through Christ for pardon, if thou durst; and by these he bids thee welcome, Eph. ii. 7. Come forward, then, and sue for thy pardon.

Mot. 6. The time of pardoning grace will not last, Isa. lv. 6. 'Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.' The day will come when God will not be intreated, when abused patience will break forth into fury, Luke xiii. 24, 25. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are.' Beware lest ye sit your day of grace, and it come to that, ye find no place for repentance, though ye should seek it carefully with tears. Remember those that were bidden to the supper, and shifted, and were excluded, Luke xiv. 24. Delay no more. A moment's delay may be an eternal loss.

Lastly, I beseech you remember, that your eternal state depends on your being justified now or not. If ye be justified now, ye shall be saved eternally; if not, ye are lost for ever. And how dreadful

will the condemnation of those be, who by slighting an offered pardon trample on the blood of Christ, which was shed for the remission of sins!

I shall conclude this use of exhortation with a few directions.

1. Labour to get your hearts wrought up to a deep concern for a pardoned state. And for this cause, believe your miserable state by nature, that ye are once condemned. Take a view of the holy, righteous law, and your innumerable transgressions of it, besides your sinful nature. Look to the flaming justice of God? behold it in the case of the damned, in the case of Christ suffering, and see what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.

2. Go to God in Christ, and confess your sins, and condemn yourselves. Lay them out before God with shame and confusion of face, with their several aggravations. Make a full and free confession, insisting most on those sins that have been most dishonouring to God in you. Acknowledge yourselves justly condemned by the law, and God to be righteous, if he should put the sentence into execution.

Lastly, Solemnly and sincerely accept of Christ in the covenant of grace held forth in the gospel. Receive him with his righteousness, and enter under the covert of his blood. And lay all your guilt over on him, believing his ability and willingness to remove it. And accepting of Christ for justification and sanctification, ye shall be accepted and pardoned.

Exhort. 2. To justified persons. This privilege calls you to several duties.

1. Love the Lord, and love him much, for much is forgiven you. This may be oil to that holy flame, and therefore love will continue in heaven for ever.

2. Be of a forgiving disposition, Eph. iv. ult. 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.' The same Saviour that brought in remission of sins, binds us to love our enemies. And the bitter revengeful spirit against those we think have wronged us, is a sad sign that our own sin is unforgiven of God, Matt. vi. 12. 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.' They who have found what a dreadful weight sin unpardoned is, and have at length got it removed, will thereby be helped to forgive.

3. Walk humbly. Ye are justified, but it is by the righteousness of another. Ye are pardoned, but it was procured to you by the satisfaction of a Saviour. Your debt is paid, your discharge is got up; but thanks to free grace, not to you, for it.

4. Bear your troubles and crosses in a world patiently.—Your

life that was forfeited by sin is safe by grace; therefore take thankfully any troubles you meet with. For why should a living man complain, especially one that deserved to die, and yet is adjudged to life?

5. *Lastly*, Walk tenderly. God pardoning a sinner, dismisseth him as Christ did the penitent adultress, John xii. 11. 'Go, and sin no more.' Let not your broken bones be forgotten, but walk softly all your years. And if ye be pardoned, shew it by your holy and tender walk.

ADOPTION.

2 Cor. vi. 18.—*And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

These words do hold forth the singular privilege of those that obey the call of the gospel, ver. 17.—'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.' That call is not a call to separate from a church, but from those that are out of the church, ver. 14. 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' not only from outward visible communion with idolaters, but to separate from the unconverted to inward invisible communion with the family of God, ver 18. In a word, it is a call to come out of the world lying in wickedness, and to join the heavenly society.

There are but two families in the world, and to one of the two every man and woman belongs. One is Satan's family, the other God's. And these are the two terms of effectual calling. (1.) The term from which sinners are called by the gospel; that is Satan's family, which they are born in, Psal. xlv. 10. And it is made up of all the unconverted world, and fallen angels. These have a dreadful communion among themselves under one head, the devil. That is the family of unbelievers, unrighteousness, and Belial. And to come out of this the gospel calls you, ver. 17. 'Wherefore come out from among them, &c. (2.) The term to which; that is God's family, made up of saints, holy angels, and Christ as the Elder Brother having dominion over the family; he their head, and the head of Christ is God, 1 Cor. xi. 3. That is the family of believers, righteousness, and Christ. And to this the gospel calls you to come.

Thus the text proposes a great privilege of those that are effectu-

ally called, that is, adoption into the family of God. And here consider,

1. The family they are brought into; it is that of *the Lord Almighty*. No body needed to adopt, but he that had something to give. The family which believers are taken into is a rich family, seeing the Head thereof is the Almighty, who because he is Almighty can, and because he is a Father will, make his own perfectly happy.

2. Upon whom this privilege is conferred; that is, those who come out of the world and the family of Satan, and answer the gospel-call. (1.) They are aliens, they are by nature strangers to the family they are taken into; they are of an ill house, that is an enemy to the house of heaven. And whatever house men would pitch on, it would not readily be such an one: but free grace takes people from such a house. (2.) But they are separatists from it, they are such as are sick of their father's house, and people that are their own, and come off from it by faith to the Lord upon the gospel-call. Like Ruth, they leave their natural country and kindred, and come to incorporate with that other society.

3. The relation they are put into in God's family. It were much if they of the house of hell might be received into the house of heaven, in the quality of sojourners to lodge a while there; more, if in quality of domestic servants; and more, if in quality of friends: but they are received in quality of children of the family. And as all relation is mutual, upon the one hand, God becomes their *Father*. That is a kindly word, and that he is to them. On the other, they become *sons and daughters*. Observe, how particular this promise is, expressly made to both sexes. Whatever privileges in external things men had of old, or yet have above women; yet in respect of spiritual privileges in Christ they are alike. The one are sons, and the other daughters, both children equally dear to our heavenly Father.

4. *Lastly*, The confirmation of this privilege, and the promise thereof, *saith the Lord*. If a man or angel had said it, it could hardly have gained credit, that there should be such an adoption. But God himself says it; and it is impious therefore to disbelieve it.

The sum of the words may be comprised in the following doctrine, viz.

Doct. 'As adoption into God's family is the peculiar privilege of those that are effectually called, so whosoever will comply with the gospel-call, and come away, shall be adopted into God's family: God will be a Father to them, and they shall be his sons and daughters.'

This doctrine has two branches.

I. Adoption into God's family is the peculiar privilege of those that are effectually called.

II. Whosoever will comply with the gospel call, shall be adopted into God's family; God will be their Father, and they shall be his sons and daughters.

I shall prosecute these two in order.

I. Adoption into God's family is the peculiar privilege of those that are effectually called. Adoption follows our justification; and is 'an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.'

Here I shall endeavour to shew,

1. What adoption in general is.
2. What are the parts of adoption.
3. The properties of this adoption.
4. Apply the subject.

FIRST, I shall shew what adoption in the general is.—That we may understand this, we must consider, in the first place, what adoption among men is; and that is twofold.

1. Proper adoption, much used among the ancient Romans and Greeks, was a legal act, imitating nature, introduced for the comfort of those who wanted children, whereby one that was the natural child of another man became the son of the adopter. It was a judicial action done in presence of the magistrate; among the Greeks by way of a testament, signed and sealed in his presence; among the Romans, the adopter, the natural father, and the son, appearing before the magistrate, the adopter taking hold of the son, said, 'I avouch this person to be my son, and I have bought him with this money.' The natural father judicially yielded up his right to the adopter. And the magistrate adjudged him to be the adopter's son. The party being adopted, was made free of the city, and not only taken into the adopter's family, but ascribed into the tribe or fraternity of the adopter. It had place among those that either had no children at all, by their death or otherwise had no lawful children. But the law restrained them that they might not adopt, but in a suitableness to the quality of the adopter; so that a nobleman might not adopt a commoner, lest the dignity of the adopter should be stained by the meanness of the adopted.

2. Metaphorical adoption, which is ingrafting. Thus the stock adopts the branch that is cut off another tree, and put into another branch of it. For as the adopter takes another man's child, and nourishes him as his own; so the ingrafted branch is counted among the natural branches, and partakes with them of the sap of the stock. Hence you may see, that

Divine adoption is an act of God, whereby he does judicially take (and constitute) those that are by nature strangers to him, and none of his family, members of his family, and his own children, giving them the privileges of his children, or of his house as children. And it is twofold.

1. External and federal which is common to the members of the visible church, which is a society gathered out from the rest of the world, the visible family of God on earth, enjoying peculiar privileges, beyond the rest of the world. This adoption belonged to Israel of old, Rom. ix. 4. And God owned them as his sons in the midst of Egypt, Exod. iv. 22, 23. But now it is extended to us Gentiles, Gal. iii. 26, 27. This family has always, since Cain was cast out, been a separated family in the world, chosen out from among the rest; so that they are called 'the sons of God,' Gen. vi. 2. And so it is still, and will be to the end.

This adoption, though it is really in itself a high dignity, so that, in comparison of them, the rest of the world are but as dogs to children, Matth. xv. 26. yet it is not a saving relation to God. And it may be lost, as the Jews rejected did theirs. Nay one may retain it; and yet his natural relation to the devil remain, as to his internal state, so as he may be lost for ever notwithstanding it, John. viii. 44. But this is not the adoption we inquire into; but,

2. An internal and saving adoption, which is peculiar to believers, or those effectually called and converted, which make up the invisible church and family of God on earth, enjoying spiritual privileges, beyond all others without or within the visible church. These are they that are chosen out from the unconverted world lying in wickedness, according to the decree of election, and brought and ingrafted into Christ, and made real members of his body, John i. 12, 13. These God adopts, judicially avouches them to be his sons and daughters, and Satan, their natural father, is obliged to quit his right to them; and they thereby are, and are accounted, no more of his family, but children of God, and have a right to the saving special privileges of the children of his family, Gal. iv. 5. Eph. i. 5. Hence,

(1.) Adoption is not a real change of the sinner's nature; but, as justification a relative change of his state. By nature we are in a state of condemnation, but out of that we are brought in justification; and out of the state of alienation from God, by adoption. So that we are no more aliens and foreigners to the family of heaven, but domestics of it; no more the children of Satan, but of God, Eph. ii. 19. Our names are enrolled among those of the family; and though a new nature accompanies it, yet adoption itself is a

new name, not a new nature, Rev. ii. 17. though it is not an empty title, but has vast privileges attending it.

(2.). It is done in an instant, not carried on by degrees. For it is not capable of degrees, and there is no intermediate state betwixt sonship to God and to Satan; but as soon as ever a person believes in Christ, he is justified and adopted: as soon as the soul is married to Christ, she becomes a daughter of the house of heaven, and her relation to that of hell is extinguished, John i. 12. It is true, there will be at the great day a solemn declaration of that adoption, and the adopted will then be perfectly past their minority, and enter to the full possession of the inheritance in their whole man; in which sense the apostle says, 'We wait for the adoption,' Rom. viii. 23. 'But now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,' 1 John iii. 2.

SECONDLY, I come to shew what are the parts of adoption. These are two. 1. The receiving the sinner into the number of God's children. 2. Giving him a right to their privileges. That we may the more distinctly take up this, we shall take a view of this whole blessed transaction, from the first to the last, together with the parties concerned in it. And,

1. The adopter is God, and in respect of dispensation the Father, the first person of the blessed Trinity, the Father of our Lord Jesus. For as the work of redemption is the Son's, and the work of our sanctification the Spirit's, so our justification and adoption are the Father's, Eph. i. 3, 5. And hence the Father's love is celebrated in this benefit, 1 John iii. 1. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God;' though not excluding that of the Son and the Holy Ghost, who are one God with him, and act their part in this blessed transaction, bringing it about. And because, God is the Sovereign of the universe, therefore he is also the Judge, who passeth the sentence, and adjudgeth the adopted sons to himself.

2. The party adopted is an elect sinner; for it is done in pursuance of God's eternal predestination, and falls on those, and only those who are elected to it from eternity, Eph. i. 5. God from all eternity foreseeing, that though Adam was to be created a son of God in his own likeness, yet he would degenerate, and all his race be born children of wrath, and of the devil, resembling Satan naturally, and prone to obey him, as children do a father, John viii. 44. decreed, not to lose the whole race, but to bring a certain number of them into his family again by the way of adoption, the way of natural (Adam's) sonship failing, leaving others to continue in their

natural father's house and family. And all these elect ones were known from eternity to God, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

3. The natural father is the devil, that enemy of God, John viii. 44. His children they are by nature as well as others. He has a great family, one part whereof dwells in the lower house; these are the damned spirits in hell. And of those that are once got thither, there is no more hope nor possibility of their ever getting out of his family. These are entered to the inheritance of their father in almost full tale already. Another part of them are sojourning in the upper house of this world, and that house is very throng with his family. It contains a people that are his, Psal. xlv. 10. Many entire nations and families are there, wherein there are none but his. Nay, there is a world of men and women he has in this house, 1 John v. 19; and himself is god and father of the family, 2 Cor. iv. 4. who all can have no hope of a better inheritance than he has given them, even the wrath and curse prepared for him and his. It is out of this part of Satan's family that the adopted are taken.

4. The suitableness of this adoption to the glory of the Adopter, and to his family. We dare not say, he needed to take this way of furnishing himself with children, as in the case of adoption among men. He was happy in himself from all eternity, in the Son by eternal generation, when there was neither man nor angel in his family. And had all been lost together, his happiness had not been one whit diminished. But we may say, that this device of adoption was a device becoming him, and very agreeable to his glory and family.

His family did originally consist of two sorts of sons, angels and men, (not to speak here of his eternal Son). Angels were the one sort, Job xxxviii. 7; man the other, Luke iii. 38; the one as well as the other created after his own image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The one were kept in the higher house, the other in the lower. But sin entering among them, many of the family died such a death as quite dissolved the relation betwixt God and them, that they could no more call him Father, nor could he own them for his children. It seized those first of the upper house, and multitudes of them (for in one man was a legion of them) dropt down to the pit, 2 Pet. ii. 4. They infected those of the lower house, and they that received the infection from them, conveyed it to all the rest, so that death passed upon all that part of the family to a man, Rom. v. 12. So that here was an empty house made.

This evinces the suitableness of making up the family again, by the way of adoption, which by spiritual death received such a diminution. As also the suitableness of adoption from among men,

which the fallen angels have no share in. For since they were not all to be recovered that had fallen, but the justice of God was to be glorified in some of them, it was agreeable to the wisdom of God to adopt men, not fallen angels, since the whole mankind was lost, but not the whole angelic kind. Multitudes of angels stood when the rest fell, but all mankind was lost together.

5. But what shall be done for the law that forbids the staining of the Adopter's honour by the meanness of the party adopted? This was a notable impediment in the way of this device of repairing the family. The Adopter can be no higher, for he is the Sovereign King of the world, the adopted no lower, for they are not only the children of base men, but of the devil, the most miserable creature in the universe. No law could be more strict for the honour of the Adopter than the holy law of God is. And he would by no means overlook it, but magnify it, and make it honourable. What possibility then is there of God's adopting children of the devil in inconsistency with his honour?

Wisdom finds out the way, that is, that they shall be adopted in Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 5, 6. Gal. iii. 26, 27. And to let you see that this way makes it consistent with the honour of God to adopt those that by nature are children of the devil, consider three things in the mystery of Christ.

(1.) By the incarnation of the Son of God, the human nature is dignified and nobilitated, raised to a pitch of honour even above that of the angels, Heb. i. 13. So the Son of God partaking of human nature with the elect, owns them as his brethren, by virtue of their common human nature, Heb. ii. 11, 12. And for this very cause he did become man, ver. 14. which takes away the impediment arising from the meanness of the adopted, it being very agreeable to God's honour to adopt those for children who were of the same nature with his own Son, i. e. of human nature. For the Son of God, to make way for this adoption, took to himself a holy human nature, into personal union with his Godhead. Hence,

(2.) The man Christ is the Elder Brother in the repaired family of heaven, Rom. viii. 29. the first of the human nature having interest in God as a Father, after the extinguishing of the first relation by creation. So that the elect drawing to him, as one betwixt whom and them there is a natural bond of the same human nature, way is made for their adoption through him, in consistency with the honour of God.

(3.) By his obedience and satisfaction he purchased their adoption, with all other privileges to them, Gal. iv. 4, 5. And his natural bond with them gave him a direct interest to redeem them as being

their near Kinsman. So law and justice can have nothing to object against the adoption. Thus by Jesus Christ, the glorious device of repairing the family of heaven in the way of Adoption is made practicable. But how shall it be executed? Why,

6. Our Lord sends his messengers, ministers of the gospel, out into the world among those of Satan's family, to proclaim the offer of adoption unto them, that whosoever of them will leave their father's house and people, shall be adopted into the family of heaven. This is offered to them and it is pressed upon them by many arguments and intreaties to accept and come away. By their mouths the Lord cries to them, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. 'Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' Psal. xlv. 10. 'Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.' They expose the nakedness of their father's house to them. They tell them, that he is a cruel and deceitful father, John viii. 44. that he treats them as slaves, not as sons, 2 Tim. ii. ult. that the entertainment of his house is wretched and beggarly, that they have nothing to eat but dust with the serpent, or husks with the swine; that their work is base, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind; the wages, death; and that he has no inheritance to give them but what will make them eternally miserable. On the other hand, they commend the family of heaven, the Father of the family, the entertainment, the work, wages, inheritance, &c.

Hereupon the father of the family rages, and stirs up the children against them and their message. Sometimes he raises the family against them, and all that take part with them, and they set upon them violently, and knock them down, and despitefully use them, by persecutions, &c. so that many have lost their lives in the cause, for presuming to disturb that family. When he cannot get that done, he teaches them to stop their ears, that, if they must speak, what they say shall not get access into their hearts, Psal. lviii. 4, 5. And thus the most part of the family get a deafness that abides with them, and grows more and more to their dying day, and they are never cured of it.

7. But unto the elect among them God sends his Spirit, which opens their ears, awakens their conscience, and rouses them so, that they can no longer miss to hear, and understand too, what concerns themselves and both the families, Job xxxvi. 10. And then that makes deep impression on them, which the rest of the family do not at all regard; that makes them wake, while their brethren about

them are fast asleep. They see the fire of heaven ready to fall upon the house, see through the murdering designs of their father; they see how they are entertained but with vain hopes, and deluded, in that upper house for a while, till he may get them conveyed into the lower house. And so they set off to come out from among them, and be separate, that they may be received into the family of heaven. But,

8. Then their natural father bestirs himself with all his might to stop their coming out from that family, and that separation. He will set their brethren on them, whereof some will try to mock them from it, others with serpentine wisdom gravely to advise them against the fancy; others which is most dangerous, to entangle them in the work and entertainment of their father's house. Himself will attack them with flatteries, spread out his baits and allurements of temptation, promise them peace, allow them an indulgence, not to be so hard put to it in his work as before, change their work from the coarser to the finer, represent the family of heaven in base colours, that there is no liberty there, but they are pent up to intolerable strictness, &c. But if that will not do, he will fall on them with rage, and tell them, that there is no room now in the family of heaven for them, that they have been too long among them to come out and be separate now; that they are his, and he will not part with them, and therefore they may give it over. And thus, by the flatteries or the rage, some are prevailed with to turn back again, and settle down again in their father's house, like Orphah returning to her gods, after she had set off from them, Ruth i. 15. But,

9. The Spirit of Christ presses forward the elect, and determines them to seek to be received into the family of God, John vi. 45. He is to them a Spirit of light and faith; thereby they discover that there is some hope, concerning their case, that even they may be received into the family. So they that are effectually determined to leave their father's house, not to stay there, come of them what will, to come to the Lord and sue for reception, not to depart, if they should die at his door.

10. Hereupon the soul comes away to Christ, the elder brother of the family, and of our nature; and joins himself to him by faith, and is received, John vi. 37. takes hold of the offer of the marriage-covenant, and consents to the spiritual marriage with him who is the Heir of all things, and the Son of God, and so becomes his by a marriage-tie, Cant. ii. 16. The soul drawn by the Spirit to him whose name is the Branch, is put into that branch, being cut off from the natural stock, and knits therewith by faith. Thus the

soul is united to Christ, justified, and reconciled to God, and set beyond the reach of the curse.

11. *Lastly*, Upon this follows the adoption of the believer, who now has received and is ingrafted into Christ, John i. 12. Being brought out of the state of condemnation by justification, he is further dignified by a reception as a member into the family of heaven.

(1.) The Lord Jesus presents unto the Father, the Adopter and Judge, the party to be adopted into his family, Heb. ii. 13. as Joseph did Ephraim and Manasseh to Jacob. And he presents him for adoption, as one that, though by nature he be of a strange family, yet is now his own child by the spiritual birth, being born of his Spirit. As an elder brother, he presents the believer as his brother by common human nature; and as the head and husband, presents the soul as his spouse by marriage-covenant. He pleads his purchase of believers by the price of his blood, and their actual relation to him; and that therefore in fulfilment of his Father's decree, they be adopted by him, Eph. i. 5.

(2.) The natural father, the devil, upon the account of the purchase made of his child by Jesus Christ, and the child's lawful renouncing of his power and family, and coming unto Christ, is obliged to renounce and give up with him, as no member of his family any more, though sore against his will. If he appear in this judgment to defend his own interest, as Satan stood at Joshua's right hand to resist him, Zech. iii. 1. the Mediator stops his mouth, as ver. 2. 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?'

(3.) *Lastly*, The Father of our Lord Jesus, for the sake of his Son, receives the believer into the number of his children, saying in effect, As the man Christ and the angel Gabriel, ye are mine, and shall be mine; and as a Judge, he adjudges the believer to be his child, and the relation betwixt him and his natural father extinguished, Isa. xlix. 24, 25. as having purchased them with the blood of his dear Son; and farther gives them a right to the privileges of his sons.

Thus is the glorious benefit brought about, by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the elect soul adopted into the family of heaven. And this consists of two parts.

First, The adopted are received into the number of the sons of God. God becomes a Father to them, and they his sons and daughters. His family consists of many children, each one for holiness and happiness illustrious; all resembling, what indeed they are, the children of a king. They are taken by adoption out of the black number of the devil's family, consisting of devils, damned spirits, and an unconverted world, bearing the devil's image. And they

are taken into the blessed number of the sons of God, whereof his family consists. And who are they that make up that number?

1. Jesus Christ the Son of God by eternal generation, who has taken on our nature, and was declared the Son of God by his resurrection, Psal. ii. 7. He is one of the number they are received into, and therefore is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb. ii. 7. And who can recount the dignity of being of that number, whereof he is one; he who is the brightness of his Father's glory, the luminary of heaven, Rev. xxi. 22. whose splendour is greater than sun and moon? He is the chief of that number, the eldest brother, not only in respect of men, but of angels. To him belongs the dominion, priesthood, the blessing, and the double portion. And it is fit, that while we reckon him one of the number, we notice well his preeminence over all the rest, remembering the dignity of the eldest brother.

(1.) The dominion is his, the supremacy and royalty belongs unto him, and our Father has solemnly invested him therewith, Psal. ii. 6. Though all his brethren are the children of the King, yet he alone is the heir of the crown. On this Lion of the tribe of Judah the kingdom is settled, and the sceptre is given him over all the glorious family of his brethren, who are in number as the sand of the sea, Col. i. 18. Him must all his brethren praise, to him must they bow down, Gen. xlix. 8. Heb. i. 6. The sceptre put into his hand shall never depart.

(2.) The priesthood is his. In him the crown and the mitre both meet together, Zech. vi. 13. 'He shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne.' God hath given him an eternal and unchangeable priesthood, confirmed by an oath, Psal. cx. 4. He hath offered his sacrifice, and gone into the holy of holies in heaven with the blood of atonement. He hath redeemed men and confirmed angels, being made their head, Eph. i. 10. Whatever sacrifices we have to offer, God saith of Christ to us, as of Job to his friends, 'Go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept,' chap. xlii. 8. For to him it belongs to offer for the family.

(3.) The blessing is his. Though all the children be blessed, yet the eldest brother had a peculiar blessing allotted to him above all the rest. Therefore said Isaac, 'Thy brother hath taken away thy blessing,' Gen. xxvii. 35. So our Lord Christ hath received the peculiar blessing of his Father, Rom. ix. 5. He is the fountain and storehouse of blessing to all the family. Others receive the blessing in the capacity of a vessel to serve themselves, he in the

capacity of a fountain, to shed abroad unto others. And they whom he blesses shall be blessed indeed.

(4.) *Lastly*, The double portion of our Father's goods is his, as that is understood, 2 Kings ii. 9. The greatest fulness that ever any had was never comparable to him, who is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Psal. xlv. 7. Whatever portion of the Spirit men or angels are partakers of, it is still by a certain measure; but God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him, John iii. 34. For the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, Col. ii. 9. And accordingly his glory in heaven is without a parallel among his brethren, who shall all be glorious: but they receive and borrow their light from him, he gives it, Rev. xxi. 23.

2. Angels, the sons of God by creation, Job xxxviii. 7. They are of this number, and are an innumerable company of pure, and spotless, and glorious spirits, all sons of the house, with whom the adopted are fellow children of God, Heb. xii. 22. The angelical nature in itself is far more honourable than man's, seeing they are pure spirits, not clogged with bodies, as we are; therefore says the Psalmist of man, 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, Psal. viii. 5. And they have never been polluted with sin, as we are. Yet they own themselves the brethren of the adopted saints even in this life. Nay, they are content to be ministering spirits to them, even as the grown children of a family are employed to take care of the little children, their brothers and sisters, not capable to take care of themselves, Heb. i. ult.

3. *Lastly*, The saints in heaven and earth, sons of God by regeneration and adoption, Eph. iii. 15. The saints on earth are the excellent upon it, more excellent than their neighbours. And as soon as one is adopted of God, he has them all for brothers and sisters; and so there is a special love among them, as betwixt the children of one family, 1 John iii. 14. Nay, they are in the same relation to the saints in heaven, and incorporated with them, Heb. xii. 23. Though they are very far above us, yet we are children of God as well as they, as the little ones are as truly of the family as the sons of perfect age; and as that part of the family that dwells in the lower rooms, as well as those that are advanced to the higher.

This is that glorious number the adopted are received into; with these they are counted. All these have one and the same Father, God, John xx. 17; the same elder brother, Christ; and do all make up one family, whereof the elder brother is the head, whose head is God.

USE. Sue for this adoption, and for being received into this number; and for this cause come out from among the world lying in

wickedness, and be ye separate. There is a feast before us made for the children. It is a sad token for people never to partake of the childrens' bread, but ever to stand at a distance as strangers to the family: and what concern can there be in the spirits of these for the privileges of God's invisible family, that have no concern for the privileges of his visible family on earth? On the other hand, it is dangerous to intrude among the children, while one is not of the family; to come in among the children of God at the Lord's table, while they are not come out from among the children of Satan.

This adoption is in your offer. Ye that are of the black number this day, may be received into this number so honourable and glorious. If ye believe these things, they cannot but move you to come away, and join yourselves to the household of God.

Secondly, They get a right to the privileges of the sons of God. These are great privileges, even agreeable to the dignity of the family they are taken into. I shall lay these before you, to move you to seek to partake of this benefit.

1. A new name, Rev. ii. 17. and iii. 12. God's name is put upon them; and what is that, but, as it is in the text, their old name is for ever laid aside: they are no more called children of the devil, but the sons and daughters of God. They are called of God sons and daughters, Heb. xii. 5. Let the world call them what names of contempt they will, God will call them by most endearing and honourable names, as his treasure, Exod. xix. 5; his jewels, Mal. iii. 17. See the whole Song of Solomon.

2. The Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15. That is the spirit of the family of heaven, a noble and generous spirit, a spirit of love to God, and confidence in him as a Father. Hereby they are enabled to call God Father, and that is more worth than a thousand worlds. The rest of the world call him Lord, the hypocrite Master; but the believer may call him Father, at all times, in all the changes of his dispensations; for Abba is a word that, read it backward or forward, is still the same. He disowns others' pretences to this, John viii. 41, 44; but he presses it on and teaches it his own, Jer. iii. 4. 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father?'

3. Access to God and communion with him. They may come farther in than others, come forward with holy boldness, when others must stand back, Eph. iii. 12. God as a Father is familiar with his children, allows them a holy confidence with him, as children to pour their complaints into his bosom, and tell him all their wants. And never did a father take so much delight in his child's talking to him, as God, in the prayers of his people poured out, by virtue of the Spirit of adoption, Prov. xv. 8. Cant. ii. 14.

4. Special immunities and freedoms. King's children have great immunities, Matth. xvii. 26. but God's children the greatest of all. While others are condemned men, slaves, servants at best; the children are free. They are freed from the law as a covenant of works, the yoke wreathed about all others' necks. Others must work for their living, and must die, if they cannot gain life thereby: but their life is given them without it, as children. They are free from the curse, which is clapt on others, upon every breach of the law, Gal. iii. 10; but their breaches may bring on them a cross, but by no means a curse, ver. 13. They are free from the hurt of every thing in the issue, Luke x. 19; while others are liable to be worsted by the best things, they shall not be so, Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39; but bettered by the worst things that befal them, ver. 28.

5. God's fatherly love and pity. The little children, while in this world are liable to many infirmities, and he distinguishes their weakness from wickedness and pities them, Psal. ciii. 13. And the elder brother is touched with a feeling of them, Heb. iv. 15. No bowels are so tender and lasting as God's towards his children; no mother so tender of the fruit of her womb as God is of his children, Isa. xlix. 15. When he corrects them, he does it with a fatherly reluctance, Lam. iii. 33. When he gives them a frown or a rough word, his bowels yearn towards them, and their relentings go near his heart, Jer. xxx. 20. His anger is soon over, in comparison of the cloud of wrath that abides on others, though they are ready to look on it as a kind of eternity; but his returning mercies are lasting, Isa. liv. 8. And from this pity many times he spares them, when otherwise they would heavily smart, Mal. iii. 17.

6. Protection, Prov. xiv. 26. They are in danger while they are here, from the devil, the world and the flesh; in danger by temptations to sin, by calamities; but God sets a hedge about them, which neither devils nor their agents can break over, but as he opens a gap by his permission for their trial, Job i. 10. In all cases they have a Father to run to, both able and willing to protect them, Psal. xc. 1. When they fall into the hand of their enemies, they are mercifully delivered, and never left with them, Psal. xxxvii. 14. And at length he will set them beyond all danger, Rev. xxi. 25.

7. Provision, 1 Pet. v. 7. He provides for their souls, Psalm lxxxiv. 11. And since he is the God of the whole man, he provides for their bodies too, both food and raiment, Isa. xxxiii. 16. Matth. vi. 30, 32. Come what will, God's children shall be provided for; for he that feeds his birds, the ravens that cry, will not starve his children. Though he will not make provision for their lusts, he will make provision for their necessities, Psal. xxxvii. 3.

8. Seasonable and sanctified correction. What is a proper punishment and a sign of wrath on others, is a privilege to them, Heb. xii. 6. It is a special benefit of the covenant of grace, proceeding from God's fatherly love, Psal. lxxxix. 30—32. Some smart more for a whorish look after an idol, than others for giving themselves a full swing in their evil way; some more for deadness and indisposition in prayer, than others for neglecting it altogether, &c. For a small fault in a child whose education the father has a peculiar concern for, will be more severely checked than a greater in a stranger.

9. *Lastly*, An inheritance and portion, according to their Father's quality. They are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. So all is theirs, grace and glory. Their portion will never fail, but tell out through eternity, when the portion of worldly men shall be at an end, 1 Pet. i. 4. Their Father gives them of his moveables, as he sees meet; but their inheritance is not moveable, Heb. xii. 28.

THIRDLY, The next thing is to shew the properties of this adoption.

1. It is a precious and costly relation. There was a price, a great one, paid to instate the sinner in this privilege. What the chief captain said to Paul in another case, 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom,' Acts xxii. 28. a child of God may say concerning himself, though he paid not that sum himself, Gal. iv. 4, 5. The Son of God, Christ, bought them by his obedience and death. That is the price of our adoption.

2. It is a high and honourable one, John i. 12. As low as we naturally are, adopting grace raiseth us to the highest pitch of honour we are capable of; to be brethren of angels, yea, of Christ, and the children of God. 'Seemeth it a small thing to you to be son-in-law to the king?' said David; but how much more to be the sons and daughters of the King of heaven.

3. It is freely bestowed, Eph. i. 5. There is nothing in the adopted naturally, more than in the rest of their natural father's house, to move God to pitch on them rather than others, so that it is free grace merely that makes the difference. Neither birth, nor beauty, nor parts, can be here alleged, Ezek. xvi. Neither was it from indigence, as among men, that God adopted any of the children of men, but from his own bountiful nature: not to bring any additional pleasure or comfort to himself, for he needs none, but to make them partakers of his goodness.

4. *Lastly*, It is a never-failing relation. Once a child of God, ever so, 1 John viii. 35. If a child wander from his father's house, he will be sought and brought back again; so the children of God

shall persevere in the state of grace. A servant of the house of heaven may be turned out of doors, and quite leave their master, 2 Pet. ii. 1. yea, a natural son may also perish or be lost. So Adam was turned out, so the fallen angels never recovered. But God's adopted children can never fall totally away, Psal. lxxxix. 30,—34.

Use 1. Of information. Is adoption into God's family the peculiar privilege of those that are effectually called? Then,

1. The gospel-calling is the highest calling men are capable of, Phil. iii. 14. It calls men to the dignity of the sons of God. And they that undervalue it shew themselves sons of earth, that know not the things of God. It might draw tears of pity from the eyes God has enlightened, to think how the gospel-call is slighted, as idle tales, how men value themselves on trifles and baubles of this world, and think the compliance with the gospel-call a vain thing: and all this by men whose eyes the god of this world has blinded, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. who trample on the pearl, because they know not the value of it.

2. The unconverted man is of Satan's family still, a child of the devil, for he is not adopted into God's family, John viii. 44. Many a gospel-call has sounded in your ears, sinner, hast thou not come away on the call? then thou art yet a child of the devil, Acts xiii. 10. and therefore an heir of hell and of wrath. Perhaps thou wilt not believe this, and never couldst: but that is agreeable enough to the blindness of the children of the family of darkness, Rev. iii. 17. Whose image dost thou bear? Holiness is God's image, unholiness the devil's. Thy dark heart and unholy life plainly tell the family thou art of.

3. The unconverted man has no right before the Lord to sit down at the Lord's table. It is children's bread, and not to be cast to the dogs, Matt. xv. 26. It is true, men that make a credible profession of their repentance have a right before the church; for of the heart in that case men cannot judge. But a token from an angel will not bear out a child of the devil, at God's table before the Lord. God makes this feast for his children; and if God had not children to feed here, it would not be prepared: but wo to those that come in among them, not having sincerely forsaken their natural father's house, and their own people. Will he welcome the children of his grand enemy among his own? No surely. Therefore first comply with the gospel-call, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.' Come to Christ, that ye may be entered into God's family by adoption, and then come to his table.

4. Compliance with the gospel-call brings with it a right to the table of the Lord. This do, and ye shall be adopted into his fa-

mily, and have a right to the privileges thereof. This answers the question, How may we be fitted for the Lord's table? The gospel calls you to come away, forget your own people, and your father's house, the entertainment, work, and business thereof. Give up with all your lusts and idols, receive Christ for your Prophet, Priest, and King; enter into the covenant sincerely. And Christ's Father shall be your Father, and then ye shall be fitted to come to his table, and have the children's portion.

5. A true Christian is more excellent than his neighbour, Prov. xii. 26. A godly man is more preferable to a wicked man, than a king's son is to the son of a slave, though in external things the latter may have the pre-eminence. A saint in rags is a child of God, while the wicked laded with honours and wealth is a child of the devil. The former has privileges as far above those of the other, as the heavens are above the earth. O! if this were believed, people would more eagerly pursue after grace than gold, and seek the state of grace more than all the world can afford.

6. See hence the spring of the hatred of the world against the people of God, that has vented itself in all the abuses they have met with from the wicked. They are of opposite families, that will never agree, John xv. 19. Hence it is that the love of the brethren is made a sign of a child of God, 1 John iii. 14. And to be haters and despisers of them, is a black mark. But look abroad through the world, and ye will see, that if there be persons who hate to be restrained, but can take a latitude to themselves, these are the men. But as for others that dare not go into the same excess of riot, who tremble at the Lord's word, and carry at a distance from the appearance of evil, these are ready to be maligned, mocked, and despised, as men of no spirit, because not of the spirit of the devil's family. Nay, not only is the world's contempt and spite against the children, but against the very servants, whom the world despise oft-times for no other reason, but because they are servants, and concerned in the church, which is God's family on earth. Unlike the disposition of God's children, Psal. lxxxiv. 10. who say, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.'

7. *Lastly*, The people of God are brethren, and should live together in peace and unity and love, as brethren. O how unnatural are the jarrings and discords among those that profess to be of the same family of heaven! Our heavenly Father setting his children on their way home together, says, as Joseph said to his brethren, 'See that ye fall not out by the way,' Gen. xlv. 24. Lay by all

feuds and discords among yourselves, forgive as ye would be forgiven. And especially I warn all against approaching to the table of the Lord, in the leaven of bitterness, malice, and revenge, keeping up their quarrels. It is a feast for the children of the family, sealing our communion with one another; a seal of the pardon of sin, and reconciliation with God, which we cannot have unless we forgive others from the heart, Mat. vi. 15. Therefore remember, that 'if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift,' chap. v. 23, 24.

Use II. Try whether ye be the children of God, adopted into God's family or not. To quicken you hereto, consider,

Mot. 1. Ye were born children of the devil's family; he was your natural father, and there is no middle state betwixt the two families. Still ye belong either to the one or the other. Does it not concern you then to search which of the two ye are now of; whether ye be come out from among them, or are still living with them, among whom ye were born?

2. This matter is of the strictest weight. Upon the one hand, are the most excellent privileges which it is sad to lose; and on the other, the most dreadful disadvantages, which it is terrible to lie under. They differ as heaven and hell; and indeed your eternal state turns upon this point. If ye be children of God, heaven shall be your mansion; if not, hell your everlasting abode.

3. Many deceive themselves in this point. They call God Father, whom he will never own for his children, John viii. 41, 44. They look for the privileges of his children, who will be disowned, as children of Satan. And O what a terrible surprise will that be, to be cast down from the highest hopes to the lowest pitch of despair!

4. *Lastly*, This trial is at all times necessary, but especially on occasion of the sacrament, 1 Cor. xi. 28. 'Wherefore let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.' To clear this, is to clear your right to that holy ordinance. The children whom God has taken into his family by adoption, he has prepared that table for, and for none else. Others are debarred as none of his family, but of the family of Satan. They are bid welcome as his own children, for whose nourishment, growth, and comfort, he has prepared it. Ye may know this by the following marks.

Mark 1. The image ye bear. Children are like their father, and all God's children father themselves. I allude to Judges viii. 18. They each one resemble the children of a king. Look to thy own

soul, and say as Christ of the tribute-money, 'Whose image and superscription is this?' The image of God may shine more brightly in one than another, in one person at one time more than another; but his image is on all his children, 2 Cor. iii. 18. If thou bearest his image, thou wilt be like him.

1. In the head, for there will be spiritual and saving knowledge, Col. iii. 10. He is 'the Father of lights,' and his children are 'children of light,' Eph. v. 8. Ye that are yet living in your natural darkness, with whom there has been no morning to put an end to the darkness of a natural state, are yet of the family of Satan; and particularly grossly ignorant ones are so, Isa. xxvii. 11. For though some of God's children may not be book-learned, they are all Spirit-learned, John vi. 45. But if God has enlightened your darkness and ye are renewed in knowledge, it is a good sign if ye are let into the knowledge of God and spiritual things, by the working of the Spirit of the Lord on you.

It is true, there is a false light, and a vain knowledge of spiritual things, even in the devil's family; but saving knowledge is, (1.) Solid and humbling, Job xlii. 5, 6; and the more a man has of it, he is the more vile in his own eyes: the other is airy and windy, 1 Cor. viii. 1. Knowledge puffeth up, and makes a man think himself something, when he is nothing. (2.) Lively and sanctifying, John xiii. 17. When the Spirit came on the primitive Church, Acts ii. 3. there appeared tongues like fire: so true knowledge has a heat with it, to burn up known sin, and to burn toward known duty. They know and desire to know, in order to practise. The other is a sort of wild fire, that has light with it, but no heat; meet enough to lead people to the pit, where there is a burning heat but no light, 1 Cor. viii. 1. Unholy ministers and professors, that have knowledge, they are like gentlemen skilled in architecture; all the use they have for it, is to tell how a house should be built, and draw the draughts, but they never lay a stone. The child of God is like the mason that learns the trade, to the end he may work in it daily. The former may have more of the theory than the latter, and can talk more rationally about it; but they are not called masons: the latter have more of the practice, so the name is theirs. Even so in spirituals, men not enlightened in the knowledge of God, so as to practise it in works of holiness, are not called of God Christians. (3.) *Lastly*, Experimental and savoury, Phil. iii. 9. The child of God feels the power of truth on his soul. He sees the glory of Christ and religion, and he loves them, and is touched with the overcoming beauty. He feels the ill of sin, and he is put in horror with the deformity of it, 1 Peter ii. 3. The other is speculative, un-

felt, untried, 1 Cor. xiii. 1.—3. They speak of religion as a parrot, without the sense or knowledge of the things themselves, as a man does of war that was never at a battle, or one of sweet spices that he never saw, 1 Tim. i. 7.

2. In heart. Children readily partake of the disposition of their parents; so that as they are like them in the face, they are like them in their manners too. The child of God gets a new heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. So righteousness and holiness are parts of the image of God, Eph. iv. 24. Every child of God is in some measure like David, a man after God's own heart. The heart that was bent to evil, gets a set to the right side; the heart that was enmity against God, is turned to him. So that the soul loves what God loves, hates what he hates, sorrows for what grieves his Spirit, rejoices in what is acceptable to him. These are the upright and pure in heart in a gospel sense, Matth. v. 8.

But some will say, Well, I keep always a good heart to God. Others, Alas! the heart is the worst bit in me, where I can see the least likeness to God. *Ans.* Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. The heart is both the best and worst bit in man. The best, Prov. iv. 23; the worst, Jer. xvii. 9. And therefore I conclude, that the former sort are none of the children of God, because they are blind, and mistake the worst part of them for the best, the chambers of imagery for the temple of God, Rev. iii. 17. Prov. xxx. 12. The latter sort may be God's children; for that which makes the heart to be both the best and worst part, is, that in every heart of God's family on earth, there is a renewed part, the spirit; and an unrenewed part, the flesh, Gal. v. 17; the one the best part, the other the worst. So that this holds of the children of God; for the best part of an unrenewed man is his life, be it never so bad, his heart is always worse, as the fountain is worse than the stream, Mark vii. 21. Now, the child of God, looking on the unrenewed part of the heart, sees the worst bit in him: but if he look to the renewed part, it is the best for all that, better than his life, Psal. xlv. 13; be it never so good, Matth. xxvi. 41.

The heart of a child of God is a roomy house; and grace and corruption in that heart are like two flitters, one going out of the house, the other coming into it. The outgoing tenant is loath to leave the house, makes no speed to lift his plenishing, but as the incomer lifts it for him to make room for his own. So here lies the one's furniture, there the other's in and about the same house. Even so God's good things that he has in a saint, and the devil's evil things that he has in him, are both to be found in the house of the heart, and standing about the door in the life. In the heart of

a child of God, upon the one hand lies God's plenishing, faith, humility, meekness, &c. on the other, Satan's, unbelief, pride, passion, &c.; with this difference, that the latter is nearest the door, and all lifted out of their place, which they sometimes stood in, when they had the house there alone.

But what the differencing mark here of a heart on which God's likeness is, is, that the law of God is written on that heart, Heb. viii. 10. This is the peculiar privilege of a child of God. And it speaks three things.

(1.) A heart-approbation of the law. The law of God is holy and pure, condemning all impurity wherever it is found. But a child of God heartily approves of it, even though it strike against his most beloved idols. He approves of it in his judgment, as just and righteous; and not only so, but in his practical judgment, as good as well as just, Rom. vii. 12; which evidences the natural enmity to be broken, and the heart new moulded, Rom. viii. 7.

(2.) A heart-inclination to the holy law. There is a principle within the man lying the same way with the law, and bending towards what it directs to, and away from what it forbids, Rom. vii. 22. And though there be a contrary principle to this, which thwarts and crosses it, yet the child of God takes part with the former against the latter, and is striving and longing to be rid of it, Rom. vii. 24. This is the new set of the heart, given in the new birth, consisting not in bare wishes to be conformed to that law, but in a resolute bent of the heart for it, which will never leave its struggling, till it overcome at last. And,

(3.) An universality in both, Psal. cxix. 6. It is not some shreds and pieces of the law that the heart approves of and inclines to, but the whole law, in every part thereof to them known, ver. 128. The holy law in all the parts thereof is a copy of the holy divine nature, and it is transcribed into the heart of the child of God, in so far as there are gracious inclinations wrought in the soul answerable to the several points of the law, as the wax bears the impress of the seal, John i. 16. So that try the child of God in his weakest side, this approbation and inclination will be found, Psal. xviii. 23.

3. In their walk, Eph. v. 1. As children follow their father's footsteps, the children of God follow their heavenly Father. We have had the way of our Father, God, chalked out to us in the way our Lord took, and we must prove our sonship by following his steps, 1 John ii. 6. He walked in the way of humility, meekness, self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness; and if we be following his steps in sincerity, conscientiously aiming at these things, it is an evidence we are the children of God.

Particularly, the way of love to men was a notable road of his, which we must follow, Eph. v. 2. A spirit of bitterness, fieryness. and selfishness, whatever men profess, is a black mark, it is so very unlike Christ's way. And although the loving and seeking the good of our friends is so very rare in the world, and people generally hesitate not to return evil for evil, nay, many times working mischief to them that never wronged them; yet the loving of our enemies, as Christ loved his, and doing them good as we have opportunity, is absolutely necessary to evidence us to be the children of God, Matth. v. 44, 45.

Mark 2. By your affections to the family of God. A child of God has child-like affections to the family of heaven. Nature teaches us a special affection to our relations; and the new nature and state teaches the same to the heavenly family, betwixt whom there is a spiritual bond. Try the pulse of your affections, thereby to see your state.

1. A child of God has a child-like love and affection to God as his Father, and to Christ as his Elder Brother. This is a sure mark, 1 John iv. 19. They bear a superlative, transcendent love to God and Christ, loving him above all persons, and all things. He is dearer to them than lawful or unlawful enjoyments, Psalm lxxiii. 25. And this love will manifest itself.

(1.) In honouring him as a father, Mal. i. 6. A child of God has an honour for him, which the rest of the world have not. He sees a glory, loveliness, and majesty in him above all other, 1 Pet. ii. 7. which produces a love mixed with reverence, that makes up the child-like disposition.—These are separated in others. The presumptuous hypocrite seems to have a love to him, but they want reverence, and their pretended familiarity breeds contempt. The unrenewed heart, under convictions of sin and duty, has a slavish fear of him, but no love to him. But the child of God has love mixed with reverence.

(2.) A conscientious obedience to his commands, 1 John v. 3. The father's command is a sufficient bond of obedience on a kindly child; and so is God's on those that are his.—It is lamentable to think of the horrid untenderness and woful latitude that many take to themselves, whose conscience can witness, that God's command, though known, has not the weight of a feather on their consciences, in many things; especially where their own interest is concerned, or in things that are thought light of by the world. But a child of God has weighty thoughts of God's authority, smiles, and frowns, and will rather venture the displeasing of any than his Father.

(3.) In submitting to his chastisements, Micah vii. 9. 'I bear the

indignation of the Lord,' says the prophet, 'because I have sinned against him.' It is the disposition of a child of God, to justify God under the rebukes of providence, to condemn himself, and turn to the hand that smiteth.

(4.) In his absence from them, and displeasure against them, it is the disposition of a child of God, (1.) To take his absence heavily; so the spouse is heart-sick when her beloved is gone, a thing that many are very little acquainted with, Cant. v. 8. (2.) To justify him in his withdrawings; the soul leaves its complaint on itself, Psal. xxii. 1, 3. (3.) To long for his return and countenance, with a holy impatience, as Sisera's mother, Judges v. 28. 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' Psal. lxiii. 1. 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.' (4.) To take rest in nothing while he hides his face. Worldly comforts, yea, gospel-ordinances, are sapless without him. Still they say with Job, 'O that I knew where I might find him!' Job xxiii. 3. *Lastly*, To use all endeavours to find him, as the spouse did, Cant. v.

(5.) *Lastly*, In his presence with them, and the outlettings of himself to them. (1.) To be well content in the enjoyment of himself instead of all things, Psal. iv. 6, 7. (2.) To be inflamed with love to him, Luke xxiv. 32. (3.) To be desiring more and more of his presence, Cant. viii. 6. (4.) To like well the full enjoyment in heaven, Phil. i. 23. (5.) To be loath to part, Cant. iii. 5.

And to clear yet more this mark of love to God,

[1.] It is love to God for himself; not only for what he has to give us, as the hypocrite's servile love is; but also for what he is in himself, Psal. xlv. 2. 'Thou art fairer than the sons of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever, Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee.' They love him in all his perfections, particularly for his holiness and spotless purity, Psal. xcvii. 12. 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.'

[2.] They love what is his for his sake. His stamp and image on any thing makes it lovely to them, Psal. xxvi. 8. 'Lord,' says David, 'I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.' Hence they love his truths, ordinances, and people. Which brings to a second particular.

2. He has a love to the brethren of the family, 1 John iii. 14. For clearing this mark, consider,

(1.) It is a love to them as such, for the image of God appearing in them. When we love the godly for their godliness, the saints for

their sanctity, we love God in them, and so may conclude, 'that every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him,' 1 John v. 1. Hypocrites may love saints, because of natural relation to them, their obliging conversation, their being of their way or opinion, and the like: but happy those who love them for naked grace in them, that pick the pearl out of the dunghill of many unpleasing things about them, and kindly love them for that.

(2.) It is an universal love, to all the saints, Eph. i. 15. A child of God will love all who to his discerning bear God's image: not only the saints in gay clothing, but going in rags; not only those that are of our way, but of whatever party they be, if they agree with him in bearing God's image.

(3.) *Lastly*, The more grace any have, they will have the more of the love of the child of God. The more like our heavenly Father, the more we will love them, since that likeness is the cause of the love.

Mark ult. By your spirit. A child of God has the spirit of the family of heaven; the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15. Now, the Spirit of adoption is,

1. A Spirit of prayer, ib. This casts all prayerless persons that are come to years of discretion, as none of God's children. As it also casts all those, who, though they have a gift of prayer, and use it too, yet are strangers to the spirit of prayer. Now, the spirit of prayer makes spiritual worship, John iv. 24; that is, by the Spirit he is helped to praying affections, seeking the enjoyment of God himself in the duty, and has his love, faith, humility, dependence on the Lord's word through Christ, his sense of wants, sincere desire of supply, &c. stirred up in him by the Spirit, Rom. viii. 26.

2. A spirit of liberty, not of bondage, ib. The Spirit of adoption carries a man out from the influence of the covenant of works, so that he does not serve God as a slave, merely or mainly for fear of punishment, or hope of reward; but as a son does a father, out of love.

3. *Lastly*, A noble spirit, that raiseth a man's thoughts, aims, and designs, beyond the little mean things of this world; making him resolute for the enjoyment of God at any rate, and the land that is afar off, Num. xiv. 24. Those that are of noble families scorn to pursue the mean designs of the inferior sort, having a spirit suitable to their quality.—None are of such a noble extract as the saints are, by their new state: and their spirit is in some measure agreeable thereto.

II. I proceed to the second branch of the doctrine, which is, 'Whosoever will comply with the gospel-call, shall be adopted into

God's family. God will be their Father, and they shall be his sons and daughters.'

Here I shall shew,

1. What is the call of the gospel, on compliance with which men shall be adopted into God's family.

2. Confirm the doctrine.

3. Lay before you further the nature of this relation to the family of heaven.

4. Apply the subject.

FIRST, I shall show what is the call of the gospel, on compliance with which we shall be adopted into the family of God. It consists of two parts. It is a call,

1. To leave the devil's family: 'Come out from among them,' Psal. xlv. 10. Come away from the family ye were born in: leave your natural father, his house, work, and way. Sinners, ye have remained too long at home. Repent now, and be converted. Give up with your old way of sin and sloth: bestir yourselves like true Israelites, and come forth from the land of Egypt, and the house of bondage, from the iron furnace. This is the gospel-call to you.

2. To come away to Jesus Christ, the head of the blessed society, and so put yourselves into the family of heaven, Matth. xi. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 4. A father, a master, ye must have; and ye are called to change fathers and masters, to take the Lord himself instead of Satan. Join yourselves to the Lord in the covenant of grace. Offer yourselves into the family of heaven, and for that cause accept the offer of the elder brother of that family, taking him for your all, in all his offices. He is saying to you as he did to the spouse, Cant. iv. 8. 'Come with me from Lebanon,' &c. He offers to introduce you into his father's house and family, and to get you admitted among the children.

SECONDLY, I shall confirm this doctrine, 'That whosoever will comply with the gospel-call, shall be adopted into God's family.'

1. This is the plain gospel-promise, held out to sinners to engage them to come away, as in the text expressly. It is the Lord's own word, who is truth itself, and whose deeds of mercy and grace are always equal to his word; and ye may with all security venture on it. And it is no more than what was prophesied before to be the effect of the preaching of the gospel, among those that comply with it, Hos. i. 10.—'Ye are the sons of the living God.'

2. All that have complied, and come away, have met with no worse entertainment, than the promise put them in hope of, John i. 12. 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' They were of sundry sorts that received him,

some high, some low, some of the greatest sinners, that were grown sinners in the devil's family. But they all met with this entertainment. The apostle John, 1 Epist. iii. 1. speaks of this honour as common to all that have believed. And the entertainment they have got before us, was designed for the encouraging of those in after generations to come away, Eph. ii. 7.

3. This was the very end and design of the incarnation of the Son of God, his obedience, death, and sufferings, to bring in sinners as children into his Father's family, John xi. 51, 52. The repairing of the breach made therein by the fall of angels and men, was laid upon him, as the fittest person: forasmuch as he was by nature the Son of God, he was the fittest to make others sons by grace. Hence he is represented,

(1.) As the first born among many brethren, a first-born in a positive sense, whom other sons were to follow, Rom. viii. 29. The man Christ was designed to be God's first-born; and therefore there must of necessity be other men to be his brethren, as children of the same family. Else where is his pre-eminence, dominion, priesthood, &c. if there be no brethren added to him? Now these must be of men taken out of the devil's family, or not at all; for there are none other of Adam's posterity, whose nature he took.

(2.) As a Captain upon the head of the children bringing them home to their Father's house, Heb. ii. 10. The glory the saints receive at last, is given them as children and heirs, Matth. xxv. 34. And Christ is appointed the Captain of those heirs of glory, leading them to their inheritance. Now, these must draw to his standard out of Satan's family, and list themselves under his banner, his army being gathered together by the gospel.

(3.) As one lowering himself to exalt our nature, that we might be capable of adoption into his Father's family, Heb. ii. 14. For this cause he took our nature into personal union with his divine nature, that the meanness of the adopted might not be such as to stain the honour of the Adopter.—And now, since the Son of God is also the Son of man, the way is opened for the children of men to become the children of God.

(4.) *Lastly*, As travailing and bringing forth children unto God. Christ's death-pains were birth-pangs, Acts ii. 24.—Well may he call believers *Benoni* and *Nahptali*; for his pangs for bringing forth these children put him to strong crying and tears, Heb. v. 7; into an agony and bloody sweat, Luke xxii. 44; and in the end he died of them. But only they were not in vain, he will have issue by all his labour and toil, as that word signifies, Isa. liii. 11. 'He shall see of the travail of his soul.'

What ground then remains to doubt of this adoption, which Christ has been so employed for, and upon which so much of his honour depends?

4. The design of the ministry of the gospel is to bring sinners out of Satan's family into God's by adoption. And therefore they are sent out with that message in the name of the Lord, 2 Cor. vi. 17. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.' They are sent to travel betwixt the two families, and persuade sinners to forget their father's house. The Lord does not send out his ambassadors to mock you, but as really as the word of God is truth, if ye comply with their call, ye shall be God's sons and daughters.

5. *Lastly*, Whosoever shall comply with the gospel-call shall be espoused and married to Christ, and therefore cannot miss to be a child of his Father's family, Hos. ii. 19. The gospel-call is the carrying on a treaty betwixt the elder brother of the house of heaven and a child of the house of hell. It is offered to all to whom the gospel comes, and to you in particular, amongst whom the feast of the espousals is providing, Matth. xxii. 4. It is his Father's good will that this match be made. And therefore whom Christ takes for his spouse, the Father will never refuse for a child of his family.

THIRDLY, I will lay before you farther the nature of this relation unto the family of heaven. The text tells us, that the issue of this adoption is, that God will be a Father to the adopted, and they his children. Now, this may be considered in two respects. (1.) In point of privilege, and this privilege is exceedingly great; but of that we have spoken already. (2.) In point of duty, which the privilege brings along with it; and that I will now lay before you. If ye mind to join yourselves to the family of heaven, remember ye are to be there under the character of sons and daughters of the house, and must resolve to carry yourselves as such; otherwise ye do but mock God, and will ruin your own souls. Lay then your account with this, that God must be a Father to you, and ye his sons and daughters. And this in point of duty implies,

1. Ye must join interests with God's family. As the father's interest is the interest of all the children, so God's interest must be yours, on all hazards, Matth. xvi. 24. 'If any man will come after me (says Christ), let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' There is a continued battle betwixt Christ and his angels, and the devil and his; the peace will never be made. Now chuse what side you will fall in with. Christ is carrying all the family of God on earth away to heaven, in the ship of the covenant, with a design to weather all the storms they may meet with by the way; never to yield to go back to the devil's ground. Are ye con-

tent to embark with him on these terms? If so, then say now as Ruth did to Naomi, Ruth i. 16. 'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' If not, better not to put your hand to the plough, than to look back.

2. God must command, and ye must obey without disputing your Father's orders. God says to children, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right,' Eph. vi. 1. 'Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord,' Col. iii. 20. The same are the laws of the family of heaven, 1 Pet. i. 14. 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance.' If ye will come in here, leave your own corrupt will behind you, for your Father's will must be yours, Psal. xlv. 10. and ye must resolve to submit to all the laws of the house. If there be therefore any known duty ye have no mind to comply with, or known sin ye have no mind to part with, venture not in among the children, for ye cannot have the portion or welcome of a child.

3. Ye must give him internal as well as external obedience. Filial affections are due to a father; love, reverence, delight in him, and fear to offend him, Rom. viii. 15. A slave or servant will give God the hand, when they do not give him the heart. But if thou be a son, thou must have child-like affections towards him. If thou hast no heart for him, no kindly zeal and concern on thy spirit to please him, thou canst be no child of his. And if thou dost not mind to ply internal as well as external obedience, thou art not for that family.

4. Ye must resolve to imitate your Father, Eph. v. 1. 'Be followers of God, as dear children.' Conform yourselves no more to the world, to follow the way of the multitude, Rom. xii. 2. but set yourselves to write after Christ's copy, to follow his example, and to 'walk as he walked,' 1 John ii. 6. for 'he has left us an example that we should follow his steps.' Consider if ye be so minded, ye are welcome to the children's table; if not, ye are not fit to come there.

5. Ye and your lot must be at God's disposal, Psal. xlvii. 4. Ye must take what place, and act what part, in the family the Father shall think meet to dispose of you to. The soul that comes to Christ lays his all down at the Lord's feet, Acts ix. 6; and if ye mind to come into the family, lay your account with this; for God will not allow his children to carve for themselves, but leave that to him.

6. Ye must submit to correction, Heb. xii. 6, 7. The discipline of the house they must submit to who will come into it. The cross ye must be content to take up, if ever ye mind to put on the crown. Lay your account with the ilk-day's cross, and the holy-day's cross: for all the children of God are brought up under it. And they that will refuse the cross, will refuse their part in the family of heaven, since there is no part there without it.

7. *Lastly*, Ye must resolve to persevere to the end, John viii. 35. Ye must take an everlasting farewell of Satan's family, never to go back to your former lusts and idols; but to be the Lord's only, wholly, and for evermore. Never enter the threshold of the house unless ye mind to stay for ever. Be contented to have your ears nailed to the door-posts; for God has said, 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,' Heb. x. 38.

Use, Of exhortation. Comply with the gospel-call. Come to Christ out from among them, and partake of this adoption into God's family. Now ye may have God to be your Father, and ye may be his children. Secure this blessed bargain for yourselves now; and put a close to that transaction by sincerely closing with Christ, and giving up yourselves wholly to be the Lord's. I offer the following motives.

Mot. 1. Consider the wretched case of the family thou art of. Whilst thou art not a child of God, thou art a member of Satan's family, John viii. 44; and they are a miserable society. They are miserable now, and will be miserable for evermore; for God has sworn that he will have war with them for ever. See the great stroke that will be the decisive one. Matth. xxv. 41. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Every unconverted man and woman is a child of wrath; that is their heritage from the Lord, which will make judgment their food, and everlasting sorrow their bed. None of them have a garment to cover their nakedness, nor wherewith to pay their debt to divine justice, so wretchedly poor are they; and therefore Christ says, 'Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear,' Rev. iii. 18.

Mot. 2. Consider what a Father God will be to you, the best of fathers. No children are so happy as God's children are.

1. The most honourable Father; he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. And there are none whose eyes God has opened, but they will value this adoption more than all the fading honours of a world, 1 John iii. 1. Moses preferred it to being the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Heb. xi. 24, 25.

2. The most loving and compassionate Father. It goes beyond the love of fathers and mothers too to their sucking children, Isa. xlix. 15, 16. 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.' What father's love would have made him to do what he has done for his children, even when they were enemies? John iii. 16. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

3. The most helpful Father, he is able to help in all cases that his children can be in. Are they pursued? he has a refuge for them. Whatever they want, he can give them, for all is his. And if they be held at short commons at any time, it is because he sees it is best for them. When death comes, and neither father nor mother can help, he can; as Psalm xlviii. ult. 'For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.'

4. The richest Father, that has the best inheritance to give to his children, 'an inheritance incorrupted and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,' 1 Pet. i. 4. He has prepared for them a better country, a glorious city, a palace for their mansion-place; richest treasures of glory. And all these are such as shall never go from them, nor they from them.

5. The wisest Father, 'God only wise.' He is one to whose disposal one may securely resign himself absolutely. He cannot be mistaken in his measures for his children's welfare; and he ever seeks it.

6. *Lastly*, His children have the best attendants, in their life, Heb. i. ult. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?' and at their death, angels to convoy them to Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. Yea, himself is ever with them in life and in death, till he bring them where they shall be beyond hazard, Psal. xxiii. 4. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.'

Mot. 3. Consider the mighty price paid for the redemption of sinners, to make way for them into God's family, Gal. iv. 4, 5. 'When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' There was no hope of this till the Son of God undertook the work of redemption. And by his precious blood he purchased it for us. O! trample not on the price and purchase of blood.

Mot. 4. Consider what a wonderful thing it is, that there is a possibility of it, that children of Satan may become the children of God. Whoso considers their own vileness and God's greatness, must cry out with wonder, 'Is this the manner of men!'

Mot. ult. It is this day in your offer. The Lord says to you, even to all of you, as in the text, *I will be a Father unto you*, &c. And ye may have it, and have it sealed to you. But it will not always be so. The day of grace will come to an end.

Case 1. But will ever God set such a sinful and vile wretch as me among his children? *Ans.* Yes, if ye make not yourselves more vile, by rejecting Jesus Christ. I know nothing can hinder you from adoption, but that, John iii. 19. 'And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' The greatness of your sin will not do it, Isa. i. 18. 'Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' The multitude of them, Isa. lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' Your frequent backslidings, Jer. iii. 1, 4. 'They say, if a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me saith the Lord. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?' Come to Christ, unite with him by faith, in the way of the covenant, and God will pardon and adopt you.

Case 2. But I fear I never will be able to carry as a child of God. *Ans.* Is it thy sincere purpose to labour to conform thyself to the manners of God's house? then he bids thee welcome into his family. He can do for his children, what no other father can do, even transform them into his own image and likeness, and preserve them by his mighty power through faith unto salvation.

THE DIVINE CALL TO LEAVE THE DEVIL'S FAMILY, EXPLAINED AND URGED.*

2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.—*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

The sacred feast before us the Lord makes for his own children in the lower house, and for them only. His children that are above need it not. The children of the devil, which all in a state of nature are, will not get the welcome of the Master of the feast to it, for he has made it only for those of his own family. But there is another family that bears the greatest bulk in the world, and that is Satan's: and all the world belongs to one of the two. The apostle tells us there can be no communion or agreement betwixt these two families, ver. 14, 15, 16. But God making up his family of such as are brought out of Satan's, the gospel is sent into the world to invite sinners to desert their natural father's house, promising them thereupon a kindly reception into the family of God, both which we have in the text. Wherein is,

1. The gospel-call to sinners. And that is to come out from among them, &c. And here is,

(1.) The substance of the duty, *Come out from among them.* This black society, which ye are called to come out of, is that of unbelievers, unrighteousness, darkness, idolaters, headed by Belial, the devil; that is, in a word, the world lying in wickedness; all the unconverted world, which the text and context represents as the devil's family, to which the family of God is opposed. To *come out from among them*, is to come out of your natural state, to renounce the devil, the world, and sin, and to come to Christ by faith. And that the text aims at no less than this, (though it is pertinently enough applied to renouncing external visible church-communion with idolaters), I think it is evident from this, that adoption into God's family is proposed and promised on compliance with this call, ver. 18. And let men separate as they will, till they make this holy separation, that they can never have.

(2.) The manner of the duty. [1.] Ye must come away freely, and for altogether: *Be ye separate.* A withdrawing for a time

* This discourse was preached at Ettrick, June 8, 1718, immediately before the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

while the relation stands betwixt you and them, will not do; there must be a total separation, by going to the contrary side, and setting up in opposition to them: *Be ye separate.* Thus the apostle explains, Isa. lii. 11. whence this is taken. [2.] Ye must come away cleanly and honestly, taking up nothing of theirs to carry away with you, as Rachael did her father's images: *Touch not the unclean thing.* Thus God himself calls you away: *Saith the Lord.*

2. The gospel-offer and promise, on compliance with the call, *I will receive you.* I will take you in, viz. into my house and family; namely, as children by adoption, having left your natural Father, the devil. Compare ver. 18. which we explained before.

I observe from the words the following doctrine, viz.

Doct. 'The Lord calls to sinners to come freely and cleanly away out of the devil's family, promising thereupon to take them into his own family, as children of his house by adoption.'

Having at large explained the doctrine of the divine adoption from ver. 18. and applied it in the way of trial, I have chosen further to pursue that design, in a way of exhortation, in the words of this text. To prepare which for application, I shall only,

I. Shew you a few things implied in this call.

II. What this coming out from among them is.

I. I shall shew you a few things implied in this call.

1. Sinners naturally are of the devil's family, John viii. 44. Ye are in among them, else there were no need of coming out from among them. The family of Satan consists of devils, damned spirits of men, and all the unconverted world lying in wickedness; in a word, of all those that are not of the family of God. All these are under one head, the prince of devils. And accordingly, when time is at an end, they shall all be housed under one dreadful roof for ever, Matth. xxv. 41. O! unconverted sinner, thou art a son of the house of hell, (what ever blood run in thy veins), a prison-house, a dark house, a dreadfully miserable house, Matth. xxiii. 15. Never was a child liker a father than thou art like the devil. He is a fallen creature, lying in wickedness; his nature is enmity against God and his holy law; so art thou and thine. And though thou put a fair face on it by a form of godliness, that will not make thee unlike him, who can transform himself into an angel of light. So thou art among them.

2. It is possible thou may get out from among them. Satan has a great family, one part whereof he has in the lower house, in hell; these are devils and damned spirits. If once he get you down among them, ye cannot get out from among them again, but must abide among them for ever and ever. So this call has nothing ado

with that part of the devil's family; they are past hope. But there is another part of it in his upper house of this world, who as really belong to his family as the other, 2 Cor. iv. 4. with this difference, that as long as they are there, he is never quite sure of them, that as sons they shall abide in his house for ever. The elder brother of the family of heaven, the Lord of his Father's house, has his lower house in this same world, where Satan has his upper one; and he has his Father's commission to fill it out of Satan's family, those of them in his upper house. And for this cause he sends out his ambassadors, ministers, to call in the name of the Lord to them, as in the text, *Come out from among them, &c.* 'Forget thine own people, and thy Father's house,' Psal. xlv. 10. They must be in earnest with that part of the family, and give them no rest, because there is yet hope, Luke xiv. 23. and he has a Spirit that can draw them out effectually, that are farthest in, in the house.

3. Ye will not be carried away from among them against your will. Ye must come away voluntarily, setting down your own feet to make your escape, Psal. cx. 3. There is a generation that makes the doctrine of man's impotency too good a pillow for their sloth: they say they can do nothing, and they will do nothing. But if ye were willing to come away, ye would do something for that end; ye would stretch out the withered hand, ye would take the help of Christ's grace offered unto you, ye would take no rest till ye were got away.

4. Ye need not expect to get the good-will of your father, nor of the family, to the parting. The call is directed to you, without noticing them; for it is known, they will never let you go as long as they can hinder you. Therefore you must be resolute and peremptory, in spite of all opposition, to come away from among them, Mat. xi. 12. No sooner does one begin to stir out from among them, but he will raise the hue and cry after him. Hell's flatterings and threatenings are all plied to get them back again, and to lay aside their purpose. But ye must stop your ears to them all, and look not behind you, as Lot's wife did, Gen. xix. 17.

5. Ye must come out from among them, for good and all. *Be ye separate.* Come away wholly, come away for ever, Psal. xlv. 10. Come away, with a sincere purpose never to go back among them, Psal. lxxx. 18. Leave not your heart behind you. Remember Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt, for the rueful look she gave to what she had left in Sodom. They that come not away thus freely separating from them, they will not go far away, they will not go off the devil's ground: and they will go back again, if the communion were over.

6. *Lastly*, Take up nothing from among them, to bring along with you: *Touch not the unclean thing.* There are many who meaning to come out from among them, secure themselves in the devil's snare, and shut the door of the house of heaven on themselves, by the preparation they make for the journey.

(1.) They think they will need something in God's house for their hearts to feed upon. They think Christ's blood will do well enough for their consciences; but to get something to stop the mouths of their hungry hearts, that must have something to feed upon, they bring along with them some of the provision of the house they came from. [1.] Some of the dust they were wont to eat with the serpent: some lust or other, which they have sucked much sap and sweetness out of, and they know not how to live without it, more than Herod without his Herodias, or Judas without the bag, &c. But remember, if ye touch that unclean thing, God will not receive you. Leave it then behind you to the devil from whence it came; it is his proper food, Isa. lxv. ult. all the pleasure he has lies in such things. Say ye, 'I have behaved and quieted myself as a child, that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child,' Psal. cxxxi. 2. [2.] Some of the husks they were wont to eat with the swine, Luke xv. 16; the dry, sapless, foisonless world, that Satan used to dress up to them, as best suited their palate, in the pleasures, vanities, profits, and pomp of it. But touch not the unclean thing, Cant. iv. 8; and drop that unclean bulky vanity, and come away. There is no need of any such provision in our heavenly Father's house, that is abundantly provided with the product of the better country, Isa. lv. 2.

(2.) They think they will need something on them, suitable to the new house they are coming to, that they come not in among them like hand-beggars. And so they take up the garb of the house they come from; and bring it with them, even the filthy unclean garment of their own righteousness, the loathsome rags of the pretended good that is in them, or about them, to commend them to Christ. But O drop the nasty garment, and touch not that unclean thing, Isa. lxiv. 6. Come away naked and bare, and receive the blessing in the elder brother's clothes, or ye cannot have it. Seek nothing to commend you to him, but your utter misery, vileness and want of all things. The more you bring with you to commend you to him, the more securely ye shut his door on you.

II. The next head is to shew what this coming out from among them is. It is no local motion, but a spiritual motion of the soul; and I give it you briefly in three steps.

1. A hearty and unfeigned willingness to leave them, and to come

out from among them. This is the first step. And O what a deal of work is there, ere the sinner can be brought this length! No less than the power of grace is able to bring the soul to this, Psal. cx. 3. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' It is a dead grip the sinner takes of his father's house, and he will shift hither and thither ere he let go the grip. It is as death to him to think of parting with his dear lusts, that are to him as a right hand or eye, which neither promises nor threatenings can make him consent to part with, till grace loose the heart. Whosoever then has got the length of this, they have made the first step, which is the most difficult one.

2. An actual renouncing and giving up with that house, and all that belongs to it. The soul being willing to leave it, actually gives up with it, Job xxxiv. 32; renounces its natural relation to that society, their work, their way; resolving, come what will, to stay no longer there among them, it bids an eternal farewell to it. Though a Red Sea appear before such persons, which they know not how they will get through, they are peremptory they will not return to the spiritual Egypt, the house of their soul's bondage. This is the second step.

3. *Lastly*, A sincere acceptance of Jesus Christ by faith, in the marriage-covenant held forth in the gospel; whereby they take him for all, and instead of all, and give themselves to him, to be his only, wholly, and for ever, Cant. ii. 16. There is no interpendent state betwixt the two families, but the soul lifting the one foot, as it were sets down the other. It lets go the hold of its lusts and idols, by embracing of Jesus Christ, not only for a rest to the conscience, but a rest to the heart; and embracing Christ as the one pearl of great price, lets go all that it has. Thus the soul is united to Jesus Christ, and is come out from among them, as one that is married is from that moment no more of her father's house, but her husband's. So the soul, though in the midst of the world lying in wickedness, is no more of that society, but come out from among them, John xv. 19.

Now, the souls thus joined to Christ, are by him introduced to his Father's house and presence, and by him adopted as his children, as Jacob did the two sons of Joseph for his sake.

I shall not here stand to confirm the doctrine, since it is very plain from the text, and I confirmed the certainty of adoption into God's family, to those that comply with the gospel-call, the last day; but shall proceed to the application; which I make in the words of the text.

Wherefore, O sinners, '*Come forth from among them, and be ye se-*

parate,' &c. It is the Lord's call to you this day to come away freely and cleanly out of the devil's family, and the Lord will take you in. Hearken unto this,

1. Ye that have lived all your days at ease in Satan's family, never knew ye were there, and were never troubled how to get out of it. Open your eyes, and know your natural state; see yourselves children of the devil, and heirs of wrath, at length; and sleep no longer the sleep of death, but look about you; see your danger, and come out from among them, and be ye separate to-day.

2. Ye that sometimes have had an awakening, and seen yourselves undone, but have fallen asleep again, and look on that former fright as a dream. Know ye that it was most real, and represented your case to you as indeed it was, and yet is: and Satan it is, who to keep you still among them, deluded you to think that God's armies advancing against you were but the shadow of the mountains. Wherefore bestir yourselves, and come out from among them.

3. Ye apostates and backsliders, that sometimes seemed to make considerable advances in coming out, but now have gone back in among them, and fallen afresh to the entertainment, the work and manners of the house. Our Lord gives you a new call to come out from among them and go on your way again, Jer. iii. 22.

4. Ye that are halting, and in a doubt what to do, whether to come out from among them or not. Conscience is pressing you forward, and corruption drawing you back. Something tells you, 'To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' Something else is saying, It is too soon, there will be time enough after this. Know this last is the language ye hear among them that seek the ruin of your souls. Take no heed to what they say, but resolutely come out from among them.

5. Ye that have been often aiming at coming, but never yet have come away freely and cleanly. Make a fair and cleanly separation now, *Touch not the unclean thing.* Give up with your natural father's house, and have no more to do with any thing that belongs to it. Let no beloved lust be spared. Leave not a hoof behind you, as being minded never to return.

6. *Lastly,* All that desire for Heaven or the favour of God, in time or eternity, come out from among them. And be still coming farther and farther from them, and nearer to Jesus Christ. I offer the following motives.

Mot. 1. It is a most miserable case to be among them, the true sight whereof may frighten one out of their society. Never could one that was in a den of lions, or beset with serpents, or enclosed with venomous creatures, be more desirous to be from among them,

than God's elect to be out of the world lying in wickedness, out of the devil's family, when once the Spirit of the Lord has opened their eyes to see clearly where they are, Luke xv. 17, 18. For,

1. There is not, and never will be, any peace with heaven among them. This is the apostle's argument in the text, ver. 14.—17. Sooner shall light and darkness agree, than the two families of heaven and hell. God has declared they are a society with whom he will have war for ever, Isa. lvii. ult. Some of the devil's family may be roaring on account of God's felt enmity against them, while others have a profound peace; but the one as well as the other stand for marks to the arrows of God's justice, Deut. xix. 19, 20. As long as thou art among them, thou art an enemy to God, and God is an enemy to thee, Rom. viii. 7. Luke xix. 27. Wilt thou be able to endure this? No; *Come out from among them, and be ye separate*, &c.

2. There is not, and never will be, any thing pure or clean among them. *Touch not the unclean thing*, i. e. Meddle not with any thing that belongs to them. For they, and all that is theirs, are unclean and loathsome in the sight of God, Tit. i. 15. As long as thou art among them, thy whole soul in all its faculties is utterly defiled, and so are all thy works, even the best of them; for thou canst do nothing but sin, canst do no good at all, Psal. xiv. 1. The opening of thy mouth to God in prayer or praise, is but like the opening of an unripe grave; all thy fair promises and engagements to duty, are but abominable deceit, Rom. iii. 13. The meddling with God's holy things, see what it is, Isa. lxvi. 3. 'He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol: yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.' For a child of the devil can never please God in any thing, till he come out from among them, and be separate, Heb. xi. 6.

3. There is nothing but rank poverty among them, nor ever will be, Rev. iii. 17. The best raiment among them to cover the soul's nakedness, is rags, filthy rags. And they must appear before God as their Judge; and that is all they have to hide their shame, and it will never do. The whole family is drowned in debt to the justice of God, and they have nothing wherewith to pay. Sin is the debt, and it will be exacted; and as long as ye are among them, ye cannot have a cautioner, for in the whole family there is not one that is able to answer for it. And there is no forgiveness of the debt, while ye remain among them, Acts iii. 19.

4. There is a cloud of wrath hangs above them continually, and abideth on them, and every one that is among them, John iii. ult.

While ye are among them, your state is a state of wrath, and ye are children of wrath. There is never a gleam of light or favour towards you, Psal. vii. 11. There is never one word of God speaks peace to you. While ye dwell among them, ye dwell under Mount Sinai, that fiery mountain where the curses of a broken law are flying about your ears. And though being asleep ye are secure, ye shall no sooner be awakened, than ye shall see the fearful lightnings, hear the thunders of wrath, and the voice of the trumpet, &c. Therefore I would say to you, as Deut. i. 6. 'Come out from among them; ye have dwelt too long in this mount.'

5. Death reigns among them. See where they sit, Matth. iv. 16. 'In the region and shadow of death.' The whole society are a parcel of condemned criminals, John iii. 18. that know not how soon the sentence shall be executed upon them; their father the devil ready to be the executioner; they are all in a dying condition, their souls have got their death's wounds, and they are pining away in their iniquity, while in the meantime their eyes are held that they cannot see the preciousness of the Physician. Nay, they are dead already in a spiritual sense; God, the life of the soul, is departed far from them. O! why will ye stay in the congregation of the dead? Come out from among them to the Lord of life.

6. *Lastly*, They are not to stay in this upper house of the world; they will all be down in the lower house together ere long. The devil's upper house is a throng house now; but the day comes that God will set it on fire about their ears, 2 Pet. iii. 10. And then the whole family shall go away together into the bottomless pit, and be all under one roof, so as not one shall remain behind. There are some dropping down to it daily; yet the rest remain secure; but it will not be always so. There was a dreadful cry at Dathan and Abiram's downgoing, Num. xvi. 34. What a cry will there be, when the whole family shall go down together? Rev. xx. ult. Therefore I would say to you, as Num. xvi. 26. 'Come out from among them; depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.'

Mot. 2. Come out from among them, and be ye separate; and the Lord will take you into his family, and that in the quality of sons and daughters. Ye have his word expressly for it in the text: and that has been the lot of all that came away before you, John i. 12. And that this may take with you, consider,

1. The glorious society ye shall be taken into, being taken as children into God's family by adoption. The apostle declares this at large, Heb. xii. 22,—24.

2. I might say much to the commendation of the Father of the family. He is the most honourable, loving, and helpful, and rich father, the wisest father, and he is an immortal father. His children shall never be fatherless; let all the world leave them, they shall have a father to take them up. And while they are under minority, they shall have the best attendants. The elder brother of the family is fairer than the sons of men; and he is of our nature, and will own us as of his flesh and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. And the most loving to his adopted brethren; he died for them while they were yet in the devil's family. And he can do all with his father, having the entire management of the house of heaven, John v. 22. He is a most compassionate and merciful High Priest. The Spirit of the family is a noble spirit, that will spirit you for the greatest achievements; a holy and sanctifying Spirit, that will make the vilest heart holy; a quickening Spirit, an enlightening Spirit. And all the children partake of this Spirit.

3. Ye shall have glorious privileges here; and, among the rest, establishment and perseverance in the family, John viii. 35. Come once in, and ye shall never be cast out.

4. *Lastly*, The full possession of your eternal inheritance in heaven, Matth. xxv. 34. He will give the kingdom to all his children, sons and daughters. Your elder brother will give you to sit on his throne.

Come out from among them, then, unto Jesus Christ, and so be entered into God's family by adoption. Seemeth it a small thing to you to be children of the house of heaven, to have God for your Father, and ye to be his sons and daughters. Believe this offer of the gospel, therefore, made to you, O children of the house of hell, and close with the offer of adoption into God's family, and receive the seal of it in the sacrament. I beseech you to accept it, nay, I charge you to come out from among them this day, and enter into God's family through Jesus Christ, under the pain of God's eternal displeasure. What ails you at it; the language of the hearts of many will be,

1. They do not like the laws of the house. They think it would be what would take away their liberty, and pent them up to intolerable bondage. *Ans.* No; Satan's service is slavery, and the worst of slavery. If ye continue in it, your chains will be ever on you; the chains of your lusts are rattling about you now, 2 Tim. ii. 26. and the chains of wrath will be rattling about you through eternity, Matth. xxii. 13. But those of God's family enjoy true liberty, John viii. 36. And their liberty shall be enlarged afterward, and be very glorious, Rom. viii. 21.

2. They like not the society of the house. They think it is but the peevish silly part of mankind, the scum of the world, that trouble themselves with these things. *Ans.* No; they are the excellent in the earth, Prov. xii. 26. David, a king, thought them so, Psal. xvi. 3. Why do ye despise them, but because they are of another spirit than the spirit of the devil's family? Remember, that 'not many wise men after the flesh are called,' &c. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. But I assure you the main quarrel and the ground of this is, ye like not the Father of the family, and therefore not those that bear his image, 1 John. v. 1. However, remember, that the day will come when you will say, O that my soul were in their soul's stead! 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'

3. *Lastly*, They do not believe any such thing, as that God will make men his sons and daughters. *Ans.* Then ye do not believe God's word in the text, John i. 12. Christ's death and sufferings must lose their end, Gal. iv. 4, 5. But ye will be cured of that, if not before, yet at their receiving their inheritance as children, Matth. xxv. 34. when unbelievers get their doom.

But there may be some that would fain believe it, and that with application too, that they might come away and partake of it. But Satan and their hearts muster up objections against it; such as,

1. Was it ever heard, that there was an adoption where the party adopting was not childless? *Ans.* Gods ways are not man's ways. It is free grace only, and not need, that puts the heavenly Father to adopt any of his creatures.—Yet there is a suitableness in it to the divine wisdom. God's family suffered a vast diminution by the spiritual death of children, and thus it is made up again.

2. But how is it consistent with the honour of the adopter to take men as children into his family? *Ans.* This is provided for by the incarnation of the Son; man's nature is thereby nobilitated. The Son of God became the Son of man, that so the sons of men might become the sons of God, in a consistency with God's honour.

3. But I am afraid God will never take me into his family. *Ans.* Wherefore, if ye come in by the door, through Jesus Christ? The greatness of your former sins will not hinder it, Isa. i. 18. the multitude of them, 1 John i. 7. your backslidings neither, Jer. iii. 22. though ye have been the worst of sinners, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. In ye must be, or ye perish.

4. But Satan plies me at a terrible rate, so that I think I will never get away out from among them. *Ans.* When the devil apprehends his time short, he has great wrath.—When the children of

Israel were nearest their deliverance, Pharaoh made their bondage hardest. Be resolute, like the lepers of old.

5. *Lastly*, But I fear I will never be able to carry suitably to the character of one of the heavenly family. *Ans.* Take Christ for sanctification, put your heart and life in his hand this day, for purifying and managing it, Eph. v. 25, 26. 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word.' Believe the promises of sanctification; look on them as sealed by the sacrament, and conscientiously use the means of holiness.

To shut up all, I testify to every one, that they are undone, for ever, if they come not out from among them, and be separate, and touch no unclean thing; and that there is nothing to hinder your entrance into God's family, if ye be content to come out from among them, and to close with Christ. He will receive you, and introduce you into his Father's family, entertain you at his table, and at length carry you to the upper house, where ye shall be for ever with the Lord.

OF SANCTIFICATION.

1 CORINTHIANS vi. 11.—*But ye are sanctified—by the Spirit of our God.*

IN this verse the apostle tells the believing Corinthians.

1. What some of them sometime were, such, viz. as those, ver. 9, 10. 'fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners;' even the worst and grossest sinners, who therefore could have nothing to move God to sanctify them.

2. What they now all were, viz. the true believers among them; they were 'washed.' Though some of them in their natural state were more unclean and vile than others, yet they all needed to be, and accordingly were washed,

(1.) In sanctification, whereby sin itself is gradually carried out of the heart and life, and grace planted therein, and actuated and advanced. This is done by the Spirit of God, who is holy, and makes the elect holy.

2. In justification, whereby the guilt of sin is removed, and the soul clothed with a perfect righteousness. This is done 'in the

name of the Lord Jesus;' i. e. by the merits and blood of Christ, through Christ apprehended by faith. The apostle's order of stating these two will be considered afterwards.

The doctrine of the text is as follows, viz.

Doct. 'All that are effectually called, are freely sanctified by the Spirit of Christ.'

In treating of this subject, I shall shew,

I. The general notion of sanctification.

II. More particularly inquire into the nature of it.

III. Deduce some inferences.

I. I will lay before you the general nature of sanctification. It imports three things.

1. Separation, or setting apart to a holy use or service.—Thus the bread and wine in the sacrament are sanctified, and thus Aaron and his sons were sanctified. And thus the sanctification of the Spirit, is the Lord's taking one out of the corrupt mass of mankind lying in wickedness, and setting him apart for himself, Psal. iv. 3. So that holiness is God's mark and seal set on a soul, testifying it to be his in a peculiar manner, Eph. i. 13.

2. Purification, or taking away of pollution. Thus people are called to sanctify themselves. There is a natural impurity and filthiness that every soul naturally is sunk in, 2 Cor. vii. 1. They are loathsome in the sight of God, all over defiled with filthy lusts. Sanctification is the Spirit's cleansing of the soul from its impurities; breaking the reign of sin, working out sin from the heart and life, as the spring doth the mud cast into it.

3. Preparation, whereby a thing or person is made fit for use or service. Thus our food is sanctified by the word and prayer. Naturally we are unfit for God's service; sanctification fits us for it, 2 Tim. ii. 21. What use are we for in the world, if not for God? But the unsanctified soul is not meet for his use: but the Lord loathes them, and their services too, as one would do liquor in a foul vessel.

II. More particularly, I will inquire into the nature of the sanctification of a soul. And let us consider,

1. The kinds of sanctification.
2. The Author of it.
3. The moving cause of it.
4. Wherein it consists.
5. The parts of it.
6. The subject of it.
7. The effect of it.
8. How it is carried on.
9. The means of it.

FIRST, I shall consider the kinds of sanctification distinguishable. Sanctification of a soul is twofold.

1. Initial sanctification, which is the implanting of the seeds of grace in the soul at first, and is the same with regeneration, 1 John iii. 9. wherein the Spirit of Christ comes into the man's heart with his graces, and takes possession of him for God. The whole soul is cast into a new mould and frame, and the image of God is drawn anew upon it.

2. Progressive sanctification, whereby that change is carried on more and more, the Spirit holding hand to the begun work, Acts xx. 32. Satan's image is more defaced, and the image of God more perfected in the soul; corruption more weakened, and grace more excited and strengthened. This work lasts through the saint's whole life, and is never perfected till death.

These are one and the same work for substance, though differing in circumstances; and no man has the one, but he has the other too. Initial sanctification goes before justification in the order of nature, as being the principle from which faith doth arise; and this accounts for the apostle's order in the text: but progressive sanctification, i. e. sanctification distinguished from regeneration, follows justification.

SECONDLY, Let us consider the Author of sanctification, whose work it is.

1. Negatively, It is not the sinner himself, nor any other creature, who is the author of it. We can well defile ourselves with all impurity, but cannot cleanse ourselves. We will lie still in our filthiness, till help come from another quarter, Eph. ii. 1. We are bid to cleanse our hands and hearts: but, alas! the rule of our duty is not the measure of our strength.

2. Positively, It is the work of God; for it needs no less power than was necessary for creating a world, or raising the dead. It is the work of a whole Trinity to sanctify a soul, as lightly as many think of being holy. It is the work of the Father, Jude, ver. i. 'Sanctified by God the Father;' of the Son, Eph. v. 26. 'That he (Christ) might sanctify—it;' of the Holy Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13. 'Through sanctification of the Spirit.' But in a special manner it belongs to the Spirit; as the Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies. It is the work of the Spirit of God then. For,

1. In initial sanctification the Spirit acts alone, and the poor sinner is wholly passive, and can do nothing that way. For he is dead in sin, and cannot move out of its dominion. He lies in the grave like the dry bones, which cannot live, nor stand up till they be breathed upon by the Lord himself.

2. In progressive sanctification, though the sinner does act towards his own sanctification, 2 Cor. vii. 1. yet he acts not but as he is acted by the Holy Spirit, Phil. ii. 13. In vain will he spread out his sails, if the wind from heaven blow not, Cant. iv. 16. No blow of his struck in the battle against lusts will do execution, if the Spirit do not carry it home.

THIRDLY, The moving cause of it. Sanctification is a great benefit: whom the Lord bestows it upon, he puts an honour on, for they are set apart for himself. There is an intrinsic glory in holiness, Psal. xlv. 13. 'The King's daughter is all glorious within.' God is glorious in it, and therefore no wonder it be the glory of the creature. When the Lord makes one holy, he does more for him than if he would give him all the gold of the Indies, or make him sole monarch of the world. Nay, the gift of sanctification is more worth than the Spirit of prophecy, or the faith of miracles: for men may be ruined notwithstanding these, but not if they have this.

The only cause of it is free grace, not any personal worth in the creature, Tit. iii. 5. As the sun shines without hire, and enlightens the dark world; so does the Holy Spirit sanctify the unholy sinner freely, without any thing in him to move him thereto, Matth. xi. 25, 26. For,

1. There is nothing in an unholy sinner that is pleasing and acceptable in God's sight, Rom. viii. 8. There is nothing but stench and rottenness in the dead soul, till the sanctifying Spirit enter into him. His best dispositions, actions, and performances, are sin, being without faith, and the mere product of nature unrenewed.

2. Though there be a great difference betwixt natural men before the world, one having by far the advantage of the other in respect of their natural tempers and the way of their life; yet the Lord does not give his sanctifying grace according to these advantages, but oft-times grace takes hold of those who are most unlikely to get it, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, &c. Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of God before Scribes and Pharisees. And oft-times sovereign grace overlooks those of the most sweet natural dispositions, and brings in those of the most rugged.

3. Sovereign grace often chuses the time for sanctifying the sinner, when he has gone the farthest length in sin and wickedness. Paul was carried the length of blasphemy and persecution, ere sanctifying grace took hold of him, 1 Tim. i. 13. And Manasseh was carried to horrid murders and witchcraft, ere he was prevented by divine grace. Many have been carried to extraordinary acts of wickedness, whereby they have lost their lives in the course of justice whom grace has plucked as brands out of the burning, to proclaim the freedom of grace.

FOURTHLY, I shall shew wherein sanctification consists, or what the Spirit doth to a sinner when he sanctifies him. It consists in the renewing of the sinner after the image of God, Eph. iv. 23, 24. The ruin of man's nature lay in defacing the image of God which was upon him: sanctification is the renewing and repairing of it, without which God can take no delight in his creature. Now, in all renewing, the old is put away, and the new brought in. So there are two acts of the Spirit in sanctification.

1. Destroying of the body of sin, called the old man, Rom. vi. 6. putting it away, Col. ii. 11. The Spirit of the Lord breaks the dominion of sin in the soul, and turns it off the throne, that it cannot command the sinner as aforetime, Rom. vi. 14. weakens and mortifies the several lusts thereof, Rom. viii. 13. So that it is a crucified man, who has got his death's wounds by the nails, and shall not come down till he die out.

2. Endowing the sinner with grace, even with all the graces of the Spirit, John i. 16. whereby the sinner becomes a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. This is the new man which is put on in sanctification; the seed of heaven, which can never misgive, but will spring up to everlasting life, being carried on towards perfection, by the same Spirit.

FIFTHLY, The parts of sanctification are two.

1. Mortification, whereby the sinner is enabled more and more to die unto sin, Rom. vi. 4, 6. The Spirit applying the virtue of Christ's death to the sinner, mortifies him to sin, blunts the edge of his affection to sin and sinful courses, so that in respect of sin, he is like a dying man. So that although he be not quite freed from it yet he is on the way to be so. His lusts are upon the cross, nailed through and pierced to the heart, not to come down till they have breathed out their last, Gal. v. 24. Like a dying man taking leave of friends, he is parting with his old lusts: like a man leaving off cares about the world, the bent of his soul is turned away from his former courses.

2. Vivification, whereby the sinner is enabled more and more to live unto righteousness, Rom. vi. 4. The sanctified sinner leads a new life, in respect of which he is as a man raised from the dead, not meddling as before in the business of the world: so the sanctified sinner lives as one of another world, not conforming himself to the sinful courses of this world, but being transformed into likeness to those of the better world, Rom. xii. 2. Phil. iii. 20. The business of his life is to serve the Lord, and work out his own salvation; to be preparing for the eternal rest in heaven, whither his heart is carried before him.

SIXTHLY, Let us view the subject of sanctification.—Under which consider,

1. Who are sanctified.

2. What of them is sanctified.

First, Who are sanctified. It is the elect who are sanctified, even all of them, and they only, Eph. i. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13. And elect infants among the rest, dying in infancy, being naturally corrupted must needs be sanctified too, by the Holy Spirit, since they are of the number of the elect. For others may be sanctified from the womb, Jer. i. 5. And none other but the elect do partake of this grace of sanctification: so that sanctification is a certain evidence of election.

Secondly, What of them is sanctified. The whole man is sanctified, 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Thess. v. 23. The grace of sanctification is a holy leaven, that goes through the whole lump, and makes every part of the man holy.

1. The soul is sanctified in all the faculties thereof, new qualities being infused into and advanced in them. (1.) The understanding naturally darkened, is renewed in saving knowledge, after God's image, Col. iii. 10. A new light is struck out in the mind; the light of grace arises there, whereby the soul knows spiritual things in another manner than before; and this advanceth unto the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. (2.) The will, naturally perverse and rebellious, gets a righteous set and bent, agreeable to the will of God, Eph. ii. 24. whereby it is averse to evil, and prone to good. (3.) The unholy affections are made holy, ibid. So that their love, hatred, delight, sorrows, &c. are changed. And herewith comes along the sanctification of the conscience and memory.

2. The body is sanctified, in so far as it is made the temple of the Holy Spirit, and a member of Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19. And the members thereof are changed in respect of their use, becoming instruments of righteousness employed for the Lord, Rom. vi. 13. In respect of which the body is presented a holy sacrifice to God, to serve and honour him with, whether by doing or suffering, Rom. xii. 1.

But although the whole man is sanctified, yet no part of the man is perfectly sanctified in this life. It is neither midnight to them as with the unregenerate, nor mid-day as with the glorified, but twilight, which is a mixture of darkness and light. Hence arises the combat betwixt the flesh and Spirit, Gal. v. 17. Every grace has a weed of the contrary corruption by the side of it, which occasions this struggle, and imperfection in the best of their works.

SEVENTHLY, I am to shew the effect of sanctification. That

is holiness. The fruit of this work of the Spirit is habitual holiness, that is, an habitual aversion of the soul to evil, and inclination to good; and actual holiness in all manner of life and conversation, in good works, which have God's word for their rule, his glory for their end, and are done in faith. Both which we have, Psal. xlv. 13. 'The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.'

EIGHTHLY, I proceed to shew how sanctification is carried on. Now, though sanctification must needs be begun in an instant, yet it is not a simple act, but a work carried on by degrees, to which many actions (and these repeated) of the Holy Spirit do concur. The believer not being perfectly renewed at first, the renovation is carried on by degrees, and the Spirit is at that work still, so as not to give it over till it be perfected, though there be many interruptions of it. And,

1. The Spirit implants grace in the soul, sows the heavenly seed there, framing the heart anew, giving it a new power, and a new set, towards God and his law; and putting in new motions and inclinations in the soul, agreeable to the holy law, and contrary to the natural sinful ones, Heb. viii. 10. So that the soul is inclined to love what before it loathed, and to loath what before it loved.

2. He preserves the grace implanted, 1 Pet. i. 5. Though it is lodged in the same heart with an ill neighbour, the remains of natural corruption; yet he keeps it that it do not die out, he preserves it as a spark of fire in the midst of the ocean.

3. He excites it and quickens it, to pursue and resist the flesh, Phil. ii. 13. Grace sometimes may fall so very low in the soul, that it becomes like a spark hid under the ashes: yet the sanctifying Spirit blows it up again into a flame, Cant. iv. 16. As the tree in the winter divested of its leaves and verdure, when the warm sun returns in the spring, the sap driven to the root returns, and is diffused through the whole.

4. He strengthens it by new supplies, Isa. xl. ult. so as the soul is enabled more and more to hold on the battle, and gets victories of the enemy, 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. For grace is a child of heaven, which has all its nourishment and strength from the same Spirit that gave it life.

5. *Lastly*, At death, but not till then, he perfects it, Heb. xii. 23. Then the new man is brought to its perfect stature, Eph. iv. 13. Often may the soul be ready to say, One day I will perish by the hand of such a lust. But the Spirit of God will perfect the work he has begun. And when the walls of the leprous house are taken down, the leprosy shall be quite removed. From what has been said, we may infer,

Inf. 1. The case of unsanctified sinners is a wretched case; they are lying with the lost world, in their filthiness, utterly unfit to serve God acceptably, or to have communion with him here or hereafter. For they are not sanctified, not separated, purified, nor prepared for God's service.

2. Behold the beauty of holiness, and fall in love with it, and labour to attain it. The holy man is more excellent than his neighbour, as set apart for God: 'Israel shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations,' because they are a holy people. It is the purity of the soul, God's image drawn on the man, it is a newness of nature from heaven, and like heaven. By it a man is a vessel fit for the Master's use, honourably employed now, and most honourably hereafter.

3. See the way how ye may be made holy. The fire from your own hearth will not purge you; faithless vows, resolutions, and endeavours, will not do it, Isa. 1. ult. The Spirit of the Lord can only perform the work. O! cry for the Spirit, wait on in ordinances for the blowing of the Spirit. Come to Christ by faith, that ye may partake of his Spirit.

4. Sanctification is not the work of a day, but a work that must be in a continual progress. Sit not down on any measure of grace attained. They that are converted still need the Spirit for their sanctification. Beware of grieving the Spirit, lest the work be interrupted. Make no truce with the enemy, but pursue the lusts of the body of sin vigorously.

5. *Lastly*, See here that there are none so unholy, but they may be made holy. It is a work of grace, and grace is powerful to overcome the strongest lusts. It is a work of free grace, and therefore no vileness nor unworthiness of the creature, that is content to be made holy, can hinder it. This may lay the pride of some, who think they deserve grace, and whose hearts fret against the Lord, if grace be not given them in an hour of temptation. Man's heart perverteth his way, and fretteth against the Lord. And this may encourage those who think the Lord will never look on them.

LASTLY, Let us consider the means of sanctification.—The outward means that the Spirit makes use of in this work, and which have all their efficacy from him, are,

1. Ordinances, public, private, and secret, Isa. xii. 3. especially the word, and sacraments thereto appended, Eph. v. 26. And they that would be holy must use these means of sanctification, whereby the Spirit begins and carries on the work.

2. Providences; smiling and favourable dispensations have a tendency that way, Rom. ii. 4. but especially afflictions are means

which the Spirit makes use of for this end, Isa. xxvii. 9. 'By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.'

I shall now shut up this subject with a few inferences, besides those I drew under the former heads.

Inf. 1. Those who are unrenewed are unsanctified. Where there is no change of heart and life, there is no grace, 2 Cor. v. 17. Ah! how many live as they were born, and are like to die as they live? They have no changes, but from evil to evil: no change from sin to holiness, and yet are unconcerned with their unrenewed state, sleeping until they sleep the sleep of death.

2. A partial change is not sanctification. Those who are changed, but not in the whole man, are not truly sanctified, but are yet in their natural pollution. Sanctification is not a new head full of knowledge, with the old heart and life; nor is it a new life, with the old heart and nature. But it is a change that goes through the whole soul and body, which must needs be followed with a new life, 2 Cor. v. 17.

3. True sanctification puts work into the hand of the sanctified, that will occupy them while they live. Dying to sin, and living to righteousness, are works that will fill up every minute we have in the world.

4. Let none be so foolish as to sit down contented without sanctification, but study holiness as ever ye would see heaven. We want a title to heaven, we must get that in justification and adoption: we want a meetness for heaven, and we must get that in sanctification. The sanctified are elected, and shall be glorified, 1 Pet. i. 1, 2, 4. And they that live and die unsanctified, shall never see heaven, Heb. xii. 14. 'For without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'

5. *Lastly*, As ever ye would be holy, attend and improve the means of grace. Let not your afflictions drive you from God, neither be stupid under them, but fall in with the design of providence in them, for your sanctification.

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